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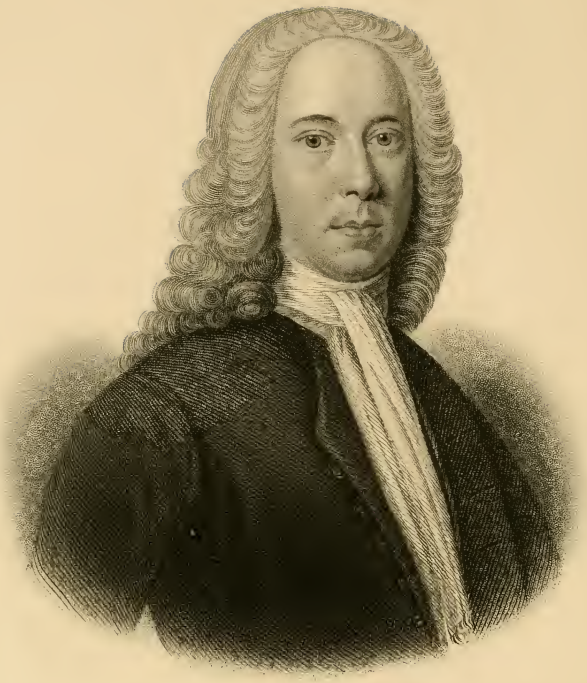

Alex^r Monorieff

Engraved by A. Freeman from the original painting in possession of Mess^rs. Pringle Perth

MEMORIALS

OF

ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF, M.A.,

AND

JAMES FISHER,

FATHERS OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY

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AND

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF

OF ABERNETHY,

WITH A SELECTION FROM HIS WORKS.

BY DAVID YOUNG, D.D.

PREFACE.

The task attempted in the following pages has been both pleasing and painful. Pleasing, because it drew attention to the character and career of a man of God, to whom the Secession Church in Scotland owes a debt of lasting gratitude; and painful, because the materials, which were once so plentiful, are now so scanty, and so ill authenticated. As memory served, I have availed myself of conversations, in years gone by, with my late venerable colleague, the Rev. Dr. Pringle, who was connected by marriage with the Moncrieff family, and of other sources of oral information, to which, through vicinity, I have long had access. But my chief dependence has been on two articles in the Christian Magazine for 1804, written, as is supposed, by the Rev. Mr. Whytock, then of Dalkeith. In these articles extracts are given from a Diary of Mr. Moncrieff's, which, if obtained, might have added much to the details of the present narrative, but which seems to be now irrecoverably lost. To original documents, therefore, my access has been extremely limited; although relatives of the family, and other friends, have done what they could to supply the deficiency. In particular, Mrs. Captain Moncrieff of Barnhill has kindly given me every facility for examining such of the family papers, as might seem at all to suit my purpose; and to that estimable lady I present respectful thanks.

In setting down a few of the statements, which are not, however, the most important, I feel myself in the predicament of one who knows enough to convince him of their truth, while yet he feels himself without the means of formally establishing them to the conviction of others. "To everything there is a time;" and as to the third of the Four Brethren, it must now be admitted, however regretfully, that the time for doing justice to his life had passed away before the deed was determined on.

For the reference to the minister of Scoonie, I am also indebted to the Christian Magazine: and for the account given of the young *Laird*, to the Weekly Christian Teacher. These may, perhaps, appear digressive; and had specific matter been more abundant, they might, perhaps, have been passed over.

But as they both are possessed of intrinsic interest, and have each a link which binds it to the subject, the balance fell, right or wrong, in favour of insertion.

The specimens of Mr. Moncrieff's authorship, which follow the narrative, are selected on the principle of present utility, and taken from his posthumous volumes as edited by his son. The "ENQUIRY INTO THE RULE AND END OF MORAL ACTIONS" is somewhat controversial, being a reply to the speculations of Professor Campbell, on the subject to which it refers. But as the errors of that individual,—the character of whose mind seems to have been pravity rather than power—lie at the root of all ungodliness, and may be found at this day, giving impulse as well as disguise to some of the forms of living infidelity, Moncrieff's antidote, although olden in attire, may still be regarded as a word in season. "CHRIST'S CALL TO THE RISING GENERATION," although taking occasionally a wider range than might now be taken on such a subject, is plain, pointed, and richly evangelical, dealing closely with the youthful mind, and plying it with those peculiar motives, which alone can prevail in bringing it to Christ.

D. YOUNG.

PERTH, 22 *May*, 1849.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF.

The name of Alexander Moncrieff stands conspicuous among the four, who, in 1733, began to be the founders of the Secession Church in Scotland. He was born in 1695, and, being the eldest son, inherited from his father, who died when he was only about thirteen years of age, the estate of Culfargie, in the parish of Abernethy, Perthshire, with its commodious mansion-house, pleasantly situated on the banks of the Earn. That the branch of the Moncrieff family from which he sprang, is of old standing among the gentry of Scotland, is abundantly evinced by existing documents. Their connection with Kintillo, an estate contiguous to that of Culfargie, can be traced back to about the commencement of the sixteenth century; and while some of them did credit to their name in the civil or military service of their country, not a few bore the higher distinction of eminent piety, and unbending integrity.

Being early written fatherless, the heir of Culfargie of whom we write was left to the care of his mother—whose name was Margaret Mitchell, of the family of Balbardie in Fife—a lady singularly qualified, by nature and by grace, for the task which Providence had reserved for her, and who lived to be rewarded for her maternal solicitude in the piety and usefulness of her

darling boy. It would appear that several of his paternal relatives were very attentive to him during his minority; and especially Mr. David Moncrieff of Rhynd, his curator in law, to whom, after he came of age, we find him making grateful acknowledgment, of the considerate kindness, with which so much had been deferred to his mother, in the management of his person and affairs. In those days more than in ours, it was common for the *younger* sons of landholding families, to be educated for the Christian ministry, the office of a clergyman, or even its emolument, being regarded as an object of laudable ambition. But secular motives cannot, in fairness, be imputed to the subject of the present narrative. He was not a younger son, but the heir of a good estate; and there is every reason to believe, that, by the grace of God, his mother's judicious piety so wrought upon his mind, as to beget in him a desire for the Christian ministry out of love to Christ himself.

At what particular time this desire was formed, or when expression was first given to it, we have not the means of knowing: but we know that it was early formed; and there is reason to believe that, ultimately, the history of a near relative of his own, who died about seven years before he was born, and whose face, of course, he never saw in the flesh, contributed more than biography has penned, towards its formation. That relative was the minister of Scoonie in Fife, his paternal grandfather, after whom he was named—a man of truly apostolic spirit—the companion and the counterpart of the martyred Guthrie, whose fame is enshrined in Scotland's piety—and a man the tale of whose worth and woes, flowing softly from his mother's lips, could scarcely fail to leave its impress on the mind of young Culfargie. What has been said of this man seems to commit us to say more; and although he was not of the Secession Fathers, in the ordinary sense of the

words, he was at one with these Fathers in principle; the same spirit which sustained him was, forty years after his death, inspiration to them; and an episode to his memory, if such it must be called, while claimed by the relationship which has just been referred to, seems due to posterity on higher grounds.

The Rev. Alexander Moncrieff of Scoonie, then, had been minister of the parish which bears that name, some time before the Restoration in 1660: for, during the sway of Oliver Cromwell, he was noted for his attachment to the Stuarts, for which he received the usual thanks of that detested race. But apart from politics, which, then as now, were variously estimated, he was a man of pre-eminent piety, ardent zeal for the doctrines of grace, and high moral courage in the defence of truth and righteousness. Instigated, as would seem, by his faithfulness in reproving iniquity, a gentleman of his parish conceived against him a deep and inveterate prejudice. To gratify his malevolence, this gentleman ventured so far as to bring him, by libel, before the Synod of Fife, charged with an offence of serious import, which we have not now the means of specifying. The accuser was defeated; his minister was fully and openly acquitted; and on the spot where he hoped to be the ruin of the innocent, he was seized with a violent distemper, which compelled him to hasten home. At home, however, there was no rest for him; his conscience became his own accuser; the trouble of his mind was far greater than the trouble of his body; he cried earnestly for a sight of his minister that he might confess the wrong, and ask forgiveness; but his haughty lady forbade the interview, and he died without obtaining it. Not long afterwards, the lady herself fell under affliction; her conscience also began to accuse her; the boon she so obstinately denied to her husband she very earnestly asked for herself; her minister hastened to pay her a visit; and in the

anguish of her heart she made full confession of the deeds of infamy done against him, by her and her departed husband. Nor, as the record has it, did the matter end here. A young man who lived in the family in the capacity of tutor, and had appeared as a witness for the libel, was seized with remorse for the part he had acted, and went to a subsequent meeting of Synod for the purpose of retracting his testimony;—but as he was prevented from effecting his purpose, his agony increased till it overset his reason, and he died in a state of insanity.

Such is a specimen of the world's enmity against the heralds of the cross, and such the way in which THE CRUCIFIED himself is sometimes terrible on their behalf. But the troubles of the minister of Scoonie did not end here. He was a burning and shining light, which the spirit of darkness seemed determined to extinguish; and what the malice of a local *laird* was too feeble to accomplish, was sought and obtained through a higher agency.

The Scottish Presbyterians of those days were, in general, favourable to the house of Stuart. For their loyalty, as they deemed it, they suffered during the Protectorate; and no sooner was the perfidious Charles restored to the throne, than he began to repay them by persecution. Not long after the king's return, a few of them, including the minister of Scoonie, met privately to prepare an Address to him. In this Address they paid him court in terms sufficiently laudatory, denouncing the measures which led to the death of his predecessor, and giving thanks to Almighty God, for the counter-revolution which had just been effected. But they ventured to remind the king, of the obligations under which he had come to the throne, with the course he was in virtue of them expected to pursue; and this was enough to kindle his ire. While their Address was yet unfinished—a mere scroll of proposals

—and while they were engaged in writing their brethren, in various parts of the country, to meet for the purpose of considering it, they were apprehended and thrown into prison, first in the Castle of Edinburgh, and then in their own houses, till the ensuing meeting of Parliament, that is the Parliament of 1661. Such was the conduct of Charles, to men whose only fault was a blind attachment to his family, and a disposition to confide where no confidence was due. It fared with them as it usually fares with men who put their religion into the keeping of princes, and look to Cæsar when they should be looking to God. Release was promised them, on the condition of confessing to the crime of framing the Address; but as honest men they could not confess to crime they had never committed, and so the persecution grew hotter and hotter.

Soon after the Parliament assembled, an indictment was produced against two of the party, namely, Alexander Moncrieff of Scoonie, and James Guthrie of Stirling, who was afterwards put to death. For Moncrieff great intercession was made; the reason of the nation being not quite extinguished, although cowardice kept it in bondage; and his standing in society might have proved his safeguard, but for his inflexible adherence to principle. The Earl of Athol, and others of note, who knew well how the tide was flowing, assured his lady that his life would be forfeited, if he continued to show himself so unbending, and earnestly entreated her to do her utmost, to elicit from him some concession; but she proved herself a wife worthy of such a husband, and so among posterity she shares in his renown. "You all know," said she to beseeching friends, "that I am happy in a good husband, that I have great affection for him and for my children; yet I know him to be so steadfast in his principles, that nobody needs to deal with him on that head: and for my part, before I would contribute any thing that would break his peace

with his Master, I would rather choose to receive his head at the Cross."*

Failing in these expedients, the assiduity of his friends resorted to another, but with no better success. According to the custom of these ignominious times, a number of ladies of rank made a present of plate to the Advocate's lady, hoping by this means to propitiate his Lordship. But the present was rejected, more in hate, there is reason to believe, than from a principle of honour; for this same Advocate had but slender claims to the credit of official integrity. During the sittings of the Parliament for that year, Mr. Moncrieff was repeatedly brought before it, and so teased with questions and menaces, that but for the greatness of his heart, and the grace of God which was in him, he might have suffered many deaths in the prospect of one. But he knew of another Judge, and had the ear of another Advocate, to whom he calmly committed his cause. "Prayer was made without ceasing, of the church, unto God for him:" and when the decision came forth, his bodily life was spared, but his official life was taken away. Their lenity, as they called it, was like themselves; it slew the minister, but spared the man. He was declared incapable of any trust, civil or ecclesiastical, and banished from his parish and his flock. The trial was severe; to such a man, perhaps, severer than death itself; for although he loved and was loved, as a husband and a father, and was much attached to his circle of friends, yet the preaching of salvation through Jesus Christ was most of all the delight of his heart.

This privilege, however, as hatred would have it, was sternly denied to him, and, soon after, to many others, in those days of rebuke and of blasphemy. In

* To see him beheaded at the common place of execution in Edinburgh.

1664, when a report of his preaching was carried to his persecutors, he was condemned to seek a habitation, twenty miles away from the seat of a bishop, and seven from a royal borough. After a while, he retired to a sequestered spot in the Highlands, and preached to little groups of people as God gave him opportunity. There it would appear that, for a time, he was comparatively free from molestation; but, being anxious about the education of his children, and hoping that the storm was somewhat abated, he ventured to seek a residence in Perth, where his preaching again exposed him to danger, and forced him to seek a lurking-place, at a distance from all who were dear to him. At length we find him with his family in Edinburgh, where also he began to preach; for no fear of man could restrain him from preaching; and by this time, (1675,) being outlawed, or intercommuned as they called it, his danger was greater than ever. But God was with him; and his sojourn, in and about the capital, presents a very remarkable conjunction of untiring malice, and merciful deliverance. On one occasion, a captain and his party searched every dwelling in the close where he lodged, except the one where he was to be found, into which they never entered, although its door was wide open. On another occasion, as he went out to take a walk, near to the place of his concealment he was met by a party sent to search for him. As they passed, and set their eyes on him, one of them remarked, "That may be the man we are in quest of; for he looks like a minister;" to which it was replied, "It cannot be he; for he knows his danger too well to be found walking there." So they went on, accomplished their search, and returned without their victim. On a third occasion, being informed that the soldiers were on their way to apprehend him, he made no haste to escape from them, till a friend urged him to do so; when, with the utmost composure, and with no appear-

ance of haste, he went out, took a short walk in the street, and returned to his house, just as the soldiers had left it. These are but specimens of his perils and escapes; till at last his friends became so anxious about him, that they entreated him to leave the country. But this he resolutely declined, saying in terms of confiding pleasantry, that he preferred to suffer where he had sinned, and would endeavour to keep possession of the house—the land of his nativity—till its Lord should return to it. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that in a modified sense he did so: for he lived till the harvest of 1688, when the arm of the persecutor was broken, and when He, who had preserved him from the violence of man, caught up his spirit to the region of blessedness, leaving his dust to sleep till the morning, where "the wicked cease from troubling," and "where the weary are at rest."

The subject of this memoir, as already stated, was the grandson of this distinguished man; and there is little stretch of fancy in supposing, that the mantle which fell from the one was, after the lapse of years, taken up by the other. Principle and emotion have their lines of descent, as well as races of men and women, and to the warm affinities of flesh and blood they easily give the preference. Men die, but their thoughts survive them; and back to the progenitor we are often conducted, for the embryo of that which is developed in his offspring. This is the way with moral evil, and alas! for its devastations; but it is sometimes the way with moral good, under the guidance of its compassionate Author; and happy is the man whom God has honoured to give an impulse in the right direction, which lives after him in his children, and passes on with augmenting force till it comes to settle in the ascendant. In the high moral bearing of the minister of Scoonie, we see the seeds of the Scottish Secession; and in the position taken by his grandson, with his

honoured coadjutors, we see the Secession brought forth. Nor are our musings arrested here; for in the history of the Secession, down to this day, we see principles brought into action, by which a deep-seated delusion is progressively exposed, and the deliverance of the church from a desolating bondage effectively promoted.

Leaving Moncrieff of Scoonie, and returning to the boyhood of the more immediate subject of our narrative, we find little to remark on his elementary education. After passing through the grammar school at Perth, and making there a creditable proficiency, he went to the University of St. Andrews, where he studied for four consecutive sessions, and took out the degree of Master of Arts. He then entered the Divinity Hall of the same University, where he studied for three sessions under Professor Haddow, of whose talents, and learning, and theological attainments, he makes respectful mention. Of Professor Rymer also, who then, it would appear, filled the chair of Moral Philosophy, he speaks in terms of much respect. Apart, indeed, from specific religion, and prior, perhaps, to its governing influence, he seems to have been one of those ingenuous youths, who, thirsting for mental improvement, are easily inspired with grateful esteem for those who aid the pursuit of it; and from the little that we know of this matter there seems ground to conclude, that by the various Professors under whom he sat, his frank and docile and studious habits were duly appreciated. As an evidence of the ardour with which he prosecuted study, we find that with the facilities furnished at St. Andrews he did not rest satisfied. The University of Leyden, in Holland, had in those days a high reputation as a school of Christian theology, earned for it by the just celebrity of John à Mark, and his contemporary Wesselius: and it was no uncommon thing for the more devoted of our Scottish students of

divinity to go there, that they might finish their course under these illustrious masters. M'Lauren, Fullarton, Bruce, Ainslie, and others are recorded as specimens of those who did so, and among the rest Alexander Moncrieff. He left his country for Leyden in September 1716, when he could be no more than one and twenty years of age; and so close was his application to study there, that serious apprehensions for his health were entertained by his friends at home. Besides spending four or five hours of the day in attending his several classes, he used to devote seven or eight more to private reading and study; and that he was a successful as well as diligent student, we happen to have the testimony of Mark himself, who, in a volume published by him at Amsterdam, in 1721, classes him with the elite of his students for the above year.* Among the few fragments which can now be recovered, is a printed Thesis quite entire, On the Future Subjection of the Son to the Father (1 Corin. xv. 28), written in very creditable Latin, and consisting of eight quarto pages, with propositions and corollaries appended, all after the manner of the schools. As it is marked "Thesis vii." and begins without an introduction, obviously supposing previous discussion, it seems to have been one of a series, on various branches of the same subject, and executed probably by a selection of students of whom Moncrieff was one. But taken by itself, it does honour to its author, and speaks well for his early proficiency, both in logic and sacred philology.†

* Referring to the exercises of that year, and recording the "nomina Prestantissimorum Juvenum, qui, exercitationes has publice defenderant," he inserts the name of "Alex. Moncrieff Scoto Perth."

† This relic bears no date, and gives no hint as to the place where it was printed; but as it is inscribed, not only to the Rev. William Moncrieff of Largo, David Moncrieff of Rhynd, his paternal uncles, John Mitchell, Balbardie, his uncle by the

But while the youthful student from the first enjoyed the advantage of earthly masters, and was not slack in availing himself of it, there was another education going on of far more commanding interest,—an education by which the heart of its subject, and all his mental acquirements were seasoned progressively for the service of God in the gospel of his Son. Assiduous domestic instruction, aided by the example of the mother who imparted it, seems to have inspired the future minister with an early reverence for religion; although for a time, as he himself declares, he had no desire for quite so much of it, as that which gave law to his ancestor at Scoonie. That ancestor he could admire, and perhaps was proud of bearing his name; but in early youth he was not prepared to take him as his model. He could not think of disowning religion; but neither could he think of yielding himself up entirely to its guidance. His early education restrained him from the one, and his love of the world restrained him from the other. Like many a youth in similar circumstances, he would fain have found a middle path, in which he might walk with God and with Mammon. But he was shut up, and not permitted long to halt between two such opinions. In the seventeenth year of his age, he began to feel an engrossing concern about the salvation of his soul; and so distressing were his convictions, that many a time he uttered the cry, "what must I do to be saved?" This state of mind seems to have been produced, during the session of college in 1711 and 12, but by what particular means we are not informed, nor does it appear that anything, beyond the ordinary course of religious observance, was at that time accessible to him.

mother's side, James Haddow and Henry Rymer, St. Andrews. but also to Mark and Wesselius, and Thomas Hoog, pastor of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam, there can be no doubt of its being one of the fruits of his labour at Leyden.

After returning from college in May, he went on a visit to his maternal uncle, the minister of Largo in Fifeshire, from whose public instructions, and private counsels, he seems to have derived great spiritual benefit. But still his disquietude continued; and he was led to special earnestness in prayer—an exercise for which, as we may yet have occasion to show, he was very remarkable, during the whole of his subsequent life. While at Largo, we are told, he often made the church or the churchyard his oratory, where, unknown to the eye or the ear of man, he wrestled for relief, pouring out his confessions and supplications to him who alone can send relief. He cried, and the Lord heard him, guiding the workings of his troubled spirit, and by an infusion of Christian hope, gradually mellowing the bitterness of his contrition, even while its intensity was scarcely abated. "At the communion at Largo," he says, "I got more of a broken heart on the Sabbath-day, than ever I found before—not in a terrible, but in a sweet and pleasing manner, by many degrees more than ever I had formerly experienced—a day I ought never to forget. I hope my sorrow was genuine and evangelical." This was in June 1712; and it may be regarded as the turning point of his spiritual history: for generally afterwards, although with some relapses, his "joy of faith," not only remained, but rose occasionally into rapture. "O what I felt," says he farther on, "at the second sacrament I participated of at the Rhynd! I hope I got a real manifestation, and an earnest of heaven. What thirst for God, and love to Christ! O sweet church, sweet churchyard of Largo! where I have wrestled and seen something of God, great, glorious, and soul-engaging! O sweet *balk** at Forgan! O it is good to be about

* A grassy foot-path between ridges, or small cultivated fields.

HIS hand! Many a temptation I had, many a struggle with corruption, many a time was I foiled; but thanks to God who giveth the victory."

Such is a specimen of the working of his mind, when his affections were yet but young and fitful. He had hoped that the night of sorrow was past, and a cloudless day begun to dawn; but like many a convert in similar circumstances, and at his stage of the Christian life, he had new trials to pass through, and new lessons to learn from them. In the law of God after the inward man he had now a supreme delight; and pleasing was the thought that this delight would be permanent: but he soon found that the other—the alien—law was still in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death. About the time of his going to Leyden, and for some time after he was there, his struggles with inward corruption were many and severe, marring the comfort he had previously enjoyed, and awakening the apprehension, that after all he had seen and felt, he was still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. But all this was God's way of correcting his mistakes, maturing his experience, and preparing him for future usefulness, as a spiritual guide to others. "Out of the eater came forth meat,—out of the strong came forth sweetness;" and he lived to be the riddle expounded.

Under this course of training, he was gradually led to a juster estimate of sin in the heart—of its power—of its malignity—of its infatuating tendency—and this made him more skilful, as well as more direct, in improving the gracious provisions of the gospel. In a school of theology far more effective than the soundest, or the best of human prelections, he was taught that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, that the work of sanctification makes progress by vicissitude, that no power which is less than divine can either commence it or carry it on, and that it is

at least, he prescribed rules to himself, which were scarcely compatible with Christian liberty; while the attempt to observe them, with its frequent shortcomings, involved him in not a little perplexity. This was a real error, although it is by no means a common one, even with those who have Christ in their hearts; and while it is condemned as an error, we are not to forget, that it clearly bespeaks a tender conscience. Still, feeling it to be an error, and beginning to gain the mastery over it, we find our youthful Christian saying, "I am tormented with things that are of no moment, thinking that this word written, or that word spoken is sin. This is a sad trouble to me. Lord help me, and if it be thy will deliver me from it. Whether it be that I have a devil thus daily molesting me, or if it be something in my constitution, I am not perfectly sure. If the devil have such power in trifles, as to make a reasonable man doubt contrary to all common sense, what power must he have, when permitted, to make men doubt of the great truths of religion. Lord, pity me, and make me to place religion where it truly is, and not in anything else; and if it be thy will remove this trouble."

These last words suggest a darker shade of the evil to which his extreme scrupulosity gave rise. That scrupulosity was itself the fruit, not of true religion, but of morbid sensibility; and the sensibility, being morbid, naturally gave birth to the morbid idea, that religion, as a whole, is but the fancy of a melancholy mind. In short, on the principle that extremes meet, and come in the long-run to support one another, its tendency was to generate a species of scepticism. It is not said that sceptical ideas rested on his mind, or gained from him so much as a momentary acceptance; but they came up to his view; they hovered over him; they haunted him like a demon; and they cost him not a little uneasiness, till, by the grace of God, he

escaped from them by such reasonings as the following: "I have *experience* of these two truths, that of man's sin and misery, and that of the matchless and suitable nature of the remedy" provided in the gospel; "and am persuaded that the soul's exercise about them, in conformity with the word of God, can be no delusion." Again; "It is a hellish temptation, that religion is a fancy. Is it a fancy to love Jesus Christ, to mourn over sin, to fight with corruption, to storm heaven, to take it by force? No, no, it is deep delusion in spiritual things that gives occasion to such a profane dream."

About the time when these sentiments were penned, or, it may be, a little before it, Mr. Moncrieff at the prompting of his own sense of duty, and, so far as appears, without the knowledge of any friend on earth, entered into a personal covenant with God; a copy of which happens to be preserved, written out with his own hand, and regularly signed and dated, with repeated records of adherence to it at subsequent dates. This interesting relic, so apt a memorial of his early piety, it seems proper to insert;—simply premising, that personal covenanting was much more common in the days of our fathers, than it is in our days,—that it is virtually exemplified in every instance, where a poor perishing sinner really surrenders himself to Christ for salvation,—that the formality of writing, date, and signature, is by no means essential to it, and does not in the least degree affect its nature as a religious exercise,—and that while the specimen before us, in a few expressions, bears marks of juvenility, which the judicious reader will know how to estimate, the writer being then but seventeen years of age, it seems far better to offend the fastidious by giving it as it is, than by the change of a single expression to interfere with its entireness.

"I who am the chief of all sinners, and less than

the least of all his mercies, yet by the good providence of the blessed, gracious, and never enough to be admired Jehovah, had not my lot casten amongst Turks and Pagans, Heathens, or Papists, but in a place where the light of the glorious gospel of Christ did shine in the brightest meridian, and in greatest perfection, and where the calls of Christ to life and salvation were most full and frequent: although alas! I have it to mourn over, that they were too long to me a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Yet now, blessed be God, and to his name be the praise, if my heart do not deceive me,

"*First*, I can say, that I believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and yet only one God, so essentially one, and personally three, that HE has made heaven and earth and all things, that he has created them, and for his pleasure, they are and were created.

"2. I believe that Adam, being created in a state of innocence, having ability to keep all God's commandments, but not so confirmed in that state but that he had a liberty of breaking them, and so being left to the freedom of his own will, he fell together with all his posterity that came from him in an ordinary generation, the covenant being made with him and all his posterity after him.

"3. Man being in this fallen, undone, and miserable condition, God's justice was irritate; so that man lay open and exposed to wrath and eternal punishment, to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever.

"4. That God, in his infinite wisdom, found out a way to reclaim poor fallen miserable man, whereby he manifested the glory of his name, as well as of his justice, viz., the covenant with his Son, that he should give him a certain number of fallen men, to be to him an elect and peculiar people, upon these terms, that he should take upon him the nature of man, and become

in every thing like unto man, sin excepted, that he should live in the world, and undergo the miseries of this life, and that he should at last offer himself a sacrifice for his elect on the cross. So I believe that he did come into the world, suffer many miseries and hardships for his elect, and at length out of his wonderful love to a certain number of poor rebel sinners, being priest himself, willingly offered up himself a sacrifice on the tree, and afterwards was exalted to glory, and there makes intercession for his people.

"5. That he is both a willing and an able Saviour, to save all that come to God through him, and them that come to him he will in no wise cast out.

"6. I do believe that I, by nature, am far from God, an enemy to God, and can never be brought nigh to him, but only by blessed Jesus Christ.

"7. I do renounce self, as being utterly unable to help myself; and so I flee unto Jesus Christ, the blessed city of refuge, that I may be clothed with the robes of his righteousness, and that so being clothed, I may not be found naked.

"8. I do renounce all my sins, both original and actual, with an endeavour after due hatred and sorrow for them, as highly displeasing in the sight of a holy God, and do resolve, through his strength, to run the way of every commanded duty, and to mourn over every thing wherein I come short; yea and to fight against every known sin, that through his strength, no sin hereafter, no known sin, shall be allowed or approved of, or have peaceable quarter in my heart or affections, but shall endeavour to walk in the strait and narrow way that leads to life everlasting.

"9. I do, with uplifted hands, accept of Christ, in sight and presence of the all-seeing God. I accept of Christ in all his offices, and on his own terms, as my Prophet, Priest, and King, as my all, my Lord, my God, my Saviour, and King; and am heartily

content to be his subject, to be at his disposal every way.

"10. And here I do endeavour, through his strength, to surrender myself, and give myself to him, in soul and body, mind, heart, and affections, and to devote myself to him alone and to his service.

"And finally, I do disclaim all confidence in myself, as to the performance of this covenant, knowing the inconstancy and unfaithfulness of my heart, how apt it is to turn aside like a deceitful bow; and therefore I lay the whole weight and stress of it upon him, who works both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure; humbly beseeching him, through Jesus Christ, graciously to accept of this offer, and mercifully to pardon my sinful weakness, and infirmities, and favourably grant his necessary assistance, that I may go on in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only. In witness of the premisses, I do subscribe the same with my hand as follows:

"ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF.

At Culfargie 11 day of July 1712, afternoon, towards or near night."

"But though, oh! my soul, because I did not know what days of tribulation I might meet with, what persecution, what I might meet with from Satan, or the world, or an awakened conscience, or fears and terrors at death, I thought convenient for thy satisfaction, and that I might not be found guilty of burying the goodness of God in oblivion, or the tokens of his wonderful condescending favour to lie in the grave of forgetfulness—to set down these things for the help of my memory, and thy comfort, and having reason to think that the Lord had graciously received the offer of myself, because of the discoveries he made to me of himself and drawing of my heart after him in my verbal

covenanting, and how he enlarged my heart and strengthened me to wrestle with him.

"2. Because after all, when I was last down in my room that night, he made me such a discovery of him, as made me long to be with himself in glory, and then made me to acquiesce in his will, that I should remain here upon the earth, if he should have any farther service for me; backed with an earnest desire, if I should live (that) he would above all things make me for his glory in my day and generation: yea and he made me sing that song, and if I was not mistaken, put that song in my mouth:

'Whom have I in the heavens high,
But thee, O Lord alone?
And in the earth whom I desire
Besides thee there is none.'

To his name be glory forever, Amen."

"Being on the 15 October 1712, to renew my covenant, and to take upon me again the seals of the covenant which I had broken, I thought it my duty to renew my covenant with the Lord, as well as the seal. So I acquiesce in all the articles of that covenant, and, if my heart do not deceive me, am heartily well pleased with the bargain, and resolve to be for him, and not for another, and to adhere to blessed HIM and his truths. But withal disclaim myself, as being utterly unwilling, unable, and insufficient for these things; but I lay the whole weight of this, and the stress of my salvation on blessed Jesus Christ. And besides (and O if he would help me to do it!) to go through the wilderness leaning on the beloved. To his name be glory forever, Amen. Subscribed the foresaid 15 October at Culfargie.

"ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF."

"I adhere unto all the articles of the covenant, and

renew it again the last Sabbath of July 1713, at Perth before going to the sacrament. O that the Lord would help me to perform all the articles of it with all my endeavour! O that he may send me help from his holy hill! and be my Shepherd and my guide to lead me in the road of righteousness, and give me strength; for in him only is strength. To his name be glory.

"Alexander Moncrieff."

"I desire to adhere to the articles of the covenant, and to renew it, and do subscribe to all the premisses, looking to the Lord Jesus Christ for strength to perform; which I pray he may grant me, and help me to lean upon him for strength. So with resolutions to endeavour the performance of them through his strength, (O that he may help me) I subscribe

"Alexander Moncrieff."

Such is a specimen of the way in which the heir of Culfargie thought and felt and schooled himself, at that period of life when the heart is full of sublunary hope, and easily fascinated by terrestrial pleasures, of which he had the prospect of commanding more than an ordinary share. It may be doubted whether the form which his exercise assumed was the wisest or the best for the progress of his piety. Of this there will probably be two opinions, even among judges the most competent; and as for the literature of what we have quoted, it is not a subject for criticism. It was never meant to be exposed to human praise or blame; but we see in it the undress of an earnest spirit, working its way in the right direction, grappling with difficulties which it felt to be formidable, and too much engrossed with spiritual realities, for caring to bestow a thought on the drapery of expression.

In the midst of these personal exercises, and not remotely connected with them, the work of the Christian

ministry, for which he was preparing himself, was now much in Moncrieff's mind. He sought the honour of this ministry, and he regarded it as a high honour—far higher than any which could accrue to him from his standing in civil society, respectable though it was—but at the same time, he was awed by the magnitude of the office, afraid of its responsibilities, and anxious that his call to it might be clear and satisfactory. Of this we find him recording his impressions in such terms as do him credit:—"I design to apply myself, as closely as possible, to reading and study for some years, in order to be a minister, if the Lord will. I desire to give the Lord the offer of my service, though I have nothing but sin and want. And if he shall through Christ, accept of me, and give me all furniture, Christ in the first place, and all necessary gifts; making me a friend of the Bridegroom, and one of the children of the family, and employ me as an instrument for bringing in others; I think I will have reason to praise him through all eternity."—"I hope God is putting on my clothes, and fitting me out for going in the quality of his ambassador, which is far sweeter to me, than if he were to encircle my head with an earthly crown, unless, by so doing, I could do as much for his glory. I hope I have got some sweet lessons from Christ. O! his teaching is sweet. I would cry to God for more love to Christ, and to have him enthroned in my heart."—"If thou call me to the sweet ministry of thy dear Son, Lord direct and manage, in thy wisdom, as to the time, that it may not be sooner or later than is for thy glory. Keep me from a sinful hand or aim. Let me have thy glory always in my eye, and give me thy presence. O God do it or I cry that thou carry me not up hence."—"Do not I long, O Lord, if thou wilt give me thy own call and be with me, to have the happiness of commending Christ to others? Oh! commend him effectually to my own soul."

As his preparatory studies drew to a close these pious breathings increased in their fervour. So when ready to enter on his trials for licence, we find him impressed with a truly awful view of the subject—so awful that, were it realized, no hireling would ever be found to obtrude himself on the flock of Christ.—"It is a very weighty matter to be a minister. I can, through divine aid, venture my own soul; since God hath made it, I shall serve him with it; and I may be severely punished if I refuse, when called to be a minister, because of the difficulty or danger of the work. But shall I risk other people's souls? If God in mercy do not prevent it, I may be instrumental in damning, instead of saving them. If I be a minister, I should have skill of my business, as every man of his trade. I should thoroughly know the disease of sin, and the remedy, Christ. If I know not my business, I should not meddle with it."

At the time when these last extracts were written, or near to it—for exact dates cannot now be given—their author began to share in that alarm about the state of doctrine in the Church of Scotland, which had previously been felt by the best of her ministers, although no public measures had as yet been resorted to, for probing the evil, or arresting its progress. In the providence of God, it so happened, that the ministers with whom he was most intimate belonged to the more evangelical class. Several of them, indeed, were his own relatives; and as he was now a student of divinity, considerably advanced in his curriculum, they conversed of church matters freely in his presence; while he, as a matter of course, took interest in their statements, and had his opinions modified by them. It was in this state of mind that he went to Leyden, a year or so before he was licensed; and while there his opposition to the errors which were infecting the church at home, instead of being diminished was deepened and

matured. He had the means of acquiring more accurate and enlarged views of the doctrines of grace, than had been furnished to him at St. Andrews, and of these means he availed himself with great avidity. Complaints, as is well known, were in 1715, laid before the General Assembly against the errors of Professor Simson, which that Assembly, in its policy, refused to entertain. This refusal, two years afterwards, the dissatisfaction being on the increase, constrained Mr. Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, to bring the case of the suspected Professor, by formal libel, before the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which libel came to be disposed of by the Assembly in 1717, the year Mr. Moncrieff was at Leyden. A particular account of Simson's errors, it were superfluous to insert here, as that has been given already—and given to good purpose—in a previous part of the present series.* Suffice it to say, that, from the first, they went to subvert the doctrine of Scripture, about the fallen condition of man, and the means necessary for his restoration, while ultimately they came to a flat denial of the true Divinity of the Son of God. Mr. Moncrieff, as has been said, was at Leyden when Mr. Webster's libel was before the courts; but by correspondence with home, he made himself acquainted with it; and knowing when the Assembly was to meet, he set apart a portion of time for special prayer to God in relation to it. Nor did he content himself with this, but, busied as he was with other studies, he wrote a pamphlet in defence of the truth which Simson was charged with impugning, in relation to which, there is reason to believe, he obtained the advice of both Mark and Wesselius, who shared with him in his deep concern for the purity and peace of the Scottish Church. Indeed, it is hinted

* Historical Sketch of the Origin of the Secession Church. By the Rev. Andrew Thomson, B. A., Edinburgh.

that during all the time of his sojourn at Leyden, this affair "was little out of his mind;" so early did that zeal for the truth of the gospel, which was so conspicuous in his later days, begin to display itself.

We come now to that period of Mr. Moncrieff's life, for which he had made such laborious preparation, both devotional and academic—his entrance, namely, on the Christian ministry. He returned from Holland in the month of August 1717, soon after the meeting of the Assembly referred to above; and not long after this—probably in the beginning of 1718—having passed the ordinary trials, was licensed by the Presbytery of Perth, as a preacher of the Church of Scotland. It so happened that just about this time, his native parish of Abernethy had become vacant, by the death of the Rev. Mr. Dunning; and an application was made to the Presbytery for the moderation of a call, with a view to Mr. Moncrieff. Nor were the moderations of those days so inane and illusory as they afterwards became: for although the power of the patrons had then been restored, yet it was exercised with a degree of lenity, and did not practically outrage the freedom of election, till some years afterward. The moderation took place in April 1720, in the presence of three members of the Presbytery; and the call was found to be harmonious. It is not said to have been unanimous; but as sixty-one heritors, and thirteen elders appended their names to it, while no active opposition is at all hinted at, the approach to unanimity must have been considerable. The ordination followed in September of the same year; and Mr. Moncrieff of Methven, a distant relative of the Culfargie family, preached and presided on the occasion. It is said that, in giving the charge, he exemplified great fidelity, in warning his kinsman against the danger which might arise from his connections in life, and exhorting him on no account to permit his position in society to become an

obstruction to his ministry. This freedom proved displeasing to nearer relatives who were present; but, when the young minister heard of their displeasure, he remonstrated with them, warmly defending the expressions objected to, declaring that he regarded them as just and seasonable, and avowing his determination, through grace, to keep all that he possessed on earth, in property or influence, subservient to the sacred office with which God had invested him.

Before Mr. Moncrieff was ordained at Abernethy—and but a little before it—what is called the Marrow controversy* had commenced in the Church of Scotland; and the course pursued in this matter, as step by step it was disclosed, gave a humiliating display of ignorance or perverseness, on the part of the General Assembly. In the book which gave rise to the controversy, as in every extended composition of man, there are expressions which admit of amendment; but taken as a whole, and when permitted to be its own interpreter, it is an admirable exposition of Christian doctrine; while the relentless condemnation of it for errors which it never taught, and for truths which its censors could not appreciate, fixed on the leaders of the Scottish Church a deep brand of infamy. The contention became hot and hotter; distinct formation was given to parties; and from what has already been said of the young minister of Abernethy, it is not difficult to foresee on which side he would be found to place himself. He was zealous for the doctrine which the Assembly had condemned, although not one of the twelve who are given to history under the honoured name of "*The Marrow-men*;" and one little incident which casts doubt on his adherence to them is easily explained. They framed a "Representation" against

* For an account of this controversy, see Historical Sketch *ut supra*. Page 13 and onwards.

the Assembly's decision, and appended their names to it, as a means of reviving the question at a subsequent meeting; and Mr. Boston complains that at a private meeting held by them at Edinburgh during the sittings of the Assembly in 1721, with a view to prepare for introducing their cause, some brethren not of their number were pleased to attend, and to give them not a little trouble. Among these he mentions Mr. Warden, and Mr. Moncrieff of Abernethy, as making themselves very active in proposing new methods of procedure, besides "picking quarrels with the Representation" itself. There might be ground for this complaint—very possibly there was ground for it, although it seems rather peevishly made—without supposing difference of opinion about the doctrines at issue. It was to be expected that the twelve, who, at not a little risk of standing and emolument, had put themselves forward to the front of the battle, would think it unseemly for those who had lagged behind, to come forward now and involve them in disputation. But it does not follow—it is not even insinuated by Boston himself—that either Warden or Moncrieff were in any degree disposed to defend or to palliate the Assembly's decision. Moncrieff, indeed, was then but young; the spirit of his mind, it may well be supposed, was but partially known to his senior brethren; and his suggestions about modes of procedure might fail to accord with their riper judgment; but in all this there is no room for suspecting his sincerity. Then, again, as to his "picking quarrels" with the "Representation," it does not appear that these were of damaging import; for some of his suggestions were ultimately adopted as acknowledged improvements; and who knows not that in the Marrow itself, which Boston was so laudably eager to vindicate, there are modes of expression which have been regretted, by the most enlightened, and the warmest of its friends? But if, at first, there was a

doubt of Moncrieff as a Marrow-man—which it is not evident there ever was—that doubt was soon dispelled; for he very cordially went along with the twelve in all their subsequent contendings, and soon gave evidence not to be mistaken, that he was neither a new nor reluctant convert to the cause they had so much at heart.

The interest taken by Mr. Moncrieff, when a student at Leyden, in the process against Professor Simson, has already been noticed; and not long after he entered on his ministry, that unhappy individual was to him, as well as to many others, the cause of renewed uneasiness. As the more judicious had predicted, the Assembly's lenity in 1717, had been lost upon Simson. It had been worse than lost; for instead of restraining, it encouraged him to go on in his course of reckless speculation, till in 1726 a process was commenced against him, for broadly and distinctly denying the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Moncrieff was not a member of the Assembly which disposed of this charge, but was present as an anxious listener; and when he saw the result to be merely suspension from preaching or teaching the students, without any farther mark of the church's disapprobation, his spirit was so moved, that having obtained leave to speak, he charged the Assembly with a very flagrant dereliction of duty. Indeed there is reason to believe that this decision so shook his confidence in the fidelity of the Assembly, as in some degree at least, to prepare his mind for the position which he subsequently assumed among the leaders of the Secession. Nor was his the only mind which these proceedings alienated. The godly throughout the church were deeply aggrieved by them; and not a few were compelled to feel, that the specific doctrines of the cross were, in point of fact, but secondary matters to the prevailing party in the Church of Scotland.

For about six years after this, or between 1726 and 1732, the name of Culfargie, as they generally called him, seems to be little mixed up with public contendings. These, so far as is now known, were to him years of comparative quietness, although not of satisfaction or hope of reform; and we have reason to believe that he devoted them to the public and private duties of his parish, in which he is said to have laboured so assiduously as to bring upon himself the infirmities of a premature old age. Nor did he labour in vain; for as his people know his worth, and were, as a body, greatly attached to him, so they listened to his instructions with a ready mind; although his strict fidelity in watching for souls was offensive to some of the temporizing. There is an incident on record, which may have occurred about this time or perhaps at a later date, and which seems entitled to insertion here, partly on account of its intrinsic interest, and partly as a specimen of the way in which the man of whom we write made proof of his ministry.

In his parish, there lived a wealthy young *Laird*, who in defiance of a pious education had forsaken the God of his fathers, and struck out into a career of headlong wickedness. He was an heritor of the parish, and the representative of a distinguished family; and as such, had occupied a conspicuous place in the house of God. This was now deserted; and he sought by every means to shun the presence of his minister, at home and abroad, as well as that of his associates in the discipline of the church. Every one saw that the young man was hastening on to ruin. His amiable spouse was now neglected and broken-hearted. His very children seemed to be forgotten; and the fireside scenes of his former days, so peaceful and so happy, were lost sight of and forsaken for the haunts of drunkenness and impiety; while his fine estate was melting away, as snow before the sun of summer, and pious

parents presenting his case to the minds of their rising children, as a specimen of the misery which a life of debauchery ever entails on its wretched victim. His constitution, as a matter of course, was soon broken down; disease began to prey upon him; his drunken companions forsook him; his conscience became his accuser; and by night and by day was he made afraid by the terrors of the Almighty. The instructions of his godly father, the tears of his tender-hearted mother, the family prayers of other times, in which he had so often been mentioned by name—all rushed on his recollection. The very words seemed vivid before him—"O good and merciful God, the God of our fathers, remember in mercy our dear child! O grant that the grace of the good Spirit may be lodged deep in his heart: and may he stand up in our stead, when we shall sleep in the silence of the grave!"

The first softening of this profligate's heart, appeared in a gush of tenderness towards his long-neglected wife and dear little children. One day as they were all hanging about him, he took his wife gently by the hand, and said to her, weeping as he spoke; "My dear, can you forgive me the wrongs I have done you?" She could make no reply, but burst into tears; and when her surprise at such words of tenderness, to which she had been so long a stranger, had somewhat subsided, she replied by kissing him, first on the one cheek and then on the other, till her tears flowed down upon his bosom; while the children, in their turn, melted by the unwonted softness of their father's voice, drew near and embraced him. "My dear," said his wife, as she wept and witnessed his mental distress, "shall we send for our worthy minister Culfargie?" He gave a reluctant and dubious assent; being evidently overwhelmed at the idea of meeting with his minister. She, however, ventured on her own course, and despatched a servant to tell the min-

ister that his presence was desired as speedily as possible.

Culfargie lost no time in complying with the invitation; but ordering the servant who usually attended him in his pastoral visitations to saddle a couple of horses, he was sitting by the bed of the afflicted *laird*, in the short space of forty minutes. There was a long and distressing silence. None of the parties seemed disposed to break it. The pastor, on his part, was anxious to know the true state of the sufferer's mind. He saw his agony, but had yet to learn how far it proceeded from the working of his conscience. At length, he took the *laird* by the hand, and began to remind him of those things which, if penitent, he would at once admit, and which, if impenitent, he required the more to have distinctly and faithfully rehearsed. He told him of the good example which had been set before him by his godly father, and of the religious instructions with which both his parents, as well as his minister now addressing him, had plied him from his childhood upwards. On these things he dwelt with marked particularity; and, "Oh! young man," said he, "what a return have you made? We sowed wheat; but nothing has yet sprung up but tares—all tares! Thy Maker and thy Redeemer called on thee, saying, 'Give me thy heart.' Oh! how tenderly this call was followed up, by every means calculated to enforce it. But thou didst turn away from God; and thou—thou didst sin still more and more. Thou hast made thy brow as brass, and thy neck as a sinew of iron! Thou wouldst not hear him that made thee. He stretched out his hands to thee all the day long; but thou hast dashed from thee the cup of mercy held out to thy lips. Ah! sinful young man, laden with iniquity, thou hast forsaken the Lord, thou hast provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, and now that anger is burning hot against thee."

The pastor paused, for he was overcome with grief. The anguish of the *laird* seemed now insupportable. He groaned and sobbed out, "Wo is me, for I am undone, mine iniquity is ever before me. Against thee, O God—against thee only—have I sinned, and in thy sight done all these evils." On hearing these words, the pastor rose abruptly, and casting a mournful look on the sufferer, hurried out of the room, and rode directly home. But when dismounting at his own door, he told the servant, whose name was John, not to unsaddle the horses, nor yet to retire to bed, but to be ready, at a moment's notice to attend his call.

John afterwards stated that, according to orders, he remained in the anti-chamber, quite in the dark as to his master's intentions; although, as the night advanced, he was enabled to understand them. Mr. Moncrieff wished for a spot where he could enjoy complete retirement in the exercise of prayer; and he knew of no place for that purpose equal to his own study. During the whole night, John overheard him wrestling in prayer for the heart-stricken penitent. Distinctly could he hear him, all prostrate on the floor, pleading with strong crying and tears, for "the poor perishing son of his ancient friend." "For thy Son's sake," he heard him say, "for his dear sake who hung upon the tree, thine own well-beloved Son's sake, O Lord have mercy on this sin-sick soul! Spirit of all grace! O life-giving Spirit! come, in thy love, revive and quicken him: he is broken in the place of dragons: let the bones which thou hast broken yet rejoice. O bind up that broken heart! Look on his disease and his pains, and forgive him all his sins."

Such was the exercise of the night; and as the day began to dawn, he summoned John to bring out the horses, and setting off at full speed, he was again, in forty minutes, in the sick man's chamber, wearing a benignant smile. Like Jacob, he had been wrestling

with the Angel of the covenant, and felt something like assurance that he had prevailed. "O Culfargie! come away," cried the distracted *laird*, the moment his eyes fell on him; "my heart has been broken by the terrors of your message: and how I have longed these slow-moving hours past to see your face again! Great was my trouble after you left me; but when I had tried, again and again, to call on the great deliverer, a ray of hope seemed to spring up, and it gave me some relief. Oh, said I, there is, there is One who is 'mighty to save!' O God of my fathers! surely thou wilt not leave me in my extreme necessity! And now sit down, Culfargie, and preach to me this Saviour; and tell me if there be in the holy word, one drop of comfort for this burning spirit of mine."

This was a joyful moment for Culfargie. He sat down by the bed-side, secretly breathing out a prayer for wisdom to speak a word in season to the heart-broken man, whose wife and children were also present, sharing in the solemn softness of the scene. "It was an hour," said one present, "of thrilling joy to all." Taking the *laird* by the hand, while tears of gladness bedimmed his eye, Mr. Moncrieff proceeded, with more than his wonted alacrity, to speak to him of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and of Christ himself as God and man our Redeemer, and the head of the everlasting covenant. He discoursed on the atonement of Christ, its necessity, its reality, and its perfection; he made a free and formal offer of Christ, to the eager and anxious listener; and in the name of his Divine Master, he called upon him, at once and without reserve, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; declaring to him, earnestly and officially, that in doing this he would be accepted and saved. He next spoke of the Holy Spirit, his divine person, his presence in the church, his work of grace in the souls of men, creating in them a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within them; and he

concluded the whole with a fervent prayer for a gracious out-pouring of this same Spirit on his young friend, now coming up from the fearful pit, and from the miry clay.

When the prayer was ended, both of them for some time wept in silence. All present were in tears. The *laird* himself was the first to speak: he could no longer conceal his emotion; and aided now by that Christian knowledge which had been so painfully instilled into his youthful mind, he opened his heart as follows:—"O Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. My Saviour, here I lay down my guilt and worthlessness at the foot of thy cross; and I accept thy blessed righteousness, as freely offered and given to me. My Divine Teacher, thou blessed Spirit, O teach a poor wandering prodigal to come to thee, O my God, and to walk in thy ways. Blessed and pitying Saviour, accept a poor sinner, the vilest of the vile, who ventures, at thy bidding, to come, in all his poverty and need, to the foot of the cross. On thy atonement, and on that alone, I rely. And, O Redeemer of poor perishing sinners, may I venture to call thee *my* Redeemer? Then, take this heart; it is thine:—wash it in thy blood, O my Saviour; to thee I give it away; to thee, my God, I dedicate this body, this soul, and my all. Oh! what a debtor to free grace. Thine I am, now and for evermore; for thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth."

Such is, at least, an outline of this interesting narrative; and by the account, the sequel was a happy one. The *laird* recovered from his bodily affliction, and lived to a good old age, giving clear and convincing evidence, that he was, in very deed, a prodigal reclaimed. The wife found her husband again, and the children their father; but first of all, and best of all, the God of salvation in Jesus Christ found a monument of his mercy. Nor need we doubt that this incident, apart from its exciting peculiarities, presents to our view a fair sample

of the minister of Abernethy's private ministrations. To the rich, in the intercourse of civil society, he could render the deference which was due; but, in the things of God, he knew no man, so as to pamper his pride, or palliate his iniquity. Being bent on the salvation of all, he regarded all as on the same level, and pointed the rich and poor alike, to one and the same narrow gate, as the entrance into life.

It does not appear that Mr. Moncrieff had any thing like a strong propensity for controversial discussion; but while he was yet but young in the ministry, necessity was laid upon him, and he yielded to the call of duty. The cloud which hung over the Church of Scotland became every year more dark and lurid; and an agitation again commenced, in which he was to be found among the most active. In 1732, the General Assembly chose to determine, that where a patron should waive his right of presentation, the choice of a minister to a vacant parish should be limited to its heritors and elders; thus intercepting that liberty of choice, which some, at least, of the more pliant patrons still conceded to the communicants. The results of this decision are well known, and it were out of place to dwell on them here, although a brief reference is indispensable to the continuity of our narrative. Dissatisfaction with the decision was felt and expressed over a large portion of the church; many Presbyteries, as well as individuals, took vigorous measures against it; prior grievances which had been partially forgotten, were by means of it brought into quickened remembrance; and a movement began, for which they who provoked it were far enough from being prepared. It was in October of that same year, that Mr. Erskine, in his far-famed sermon before the Synod of Perth and Stirling, denounced the invasion of the people's rights, with other misdoings of the ascendant party, in terms too explicit to be mistaken or forgiven. And when

the Assembly proceeded to inflict upon him the penalty of his faithfulness, Mr. Moncrieff was one of the three who made his cause their own. He stood by Mr. Erskine in the Synod at Perth; he stood by him in the Assembly; he stood by him before the Commission in August and November; and he had the honour of being one of the four, who were cast out by a sentence, which has branded the Assembly with indelible disgrace. Being laid under a suspension which they knew to be unjust, they not only protested against it, but declared themselves to be formally separated from the judicatories of the Church of Scotland, and continued in their respective parishes to minister to their flocks.

This, as is well known, was the origin of the Secession—a step which could not be lightly taken by Moncrieff, or by his associates. And, although in his case the loss of emolument was little to be regarded, there were other considerations, which as a man of heart and gentlemanly habitudes, he could not so easily get over. It threw him out of the circle with which he had been familiar, and made him an object of dislike and avoidance where, heretofore, he had been courted and esteemed. But these were matters comparatively trivial, when set up against the claims of conscience; and the whole four felt them to be so. Their attachment to the Church of Scotland was hereditary and sincere; the fear of contracting the guilt of schism—a sin in those days but dimly defined—was constantly before their minds; they were leaving behind them a minority of brethren, whose personal piety, and soundness in the faith, they readily acknowledged; their views of the utility of a State Church were different from those which have since prevailed; separation was then a rare thing in the land, and in very bad repute; and, with these things before their eyes, it seems impossible to find a motive for their secession, short of a sense of

duty to God, deeply pondered, and prayerfully matured. That this was the case with Alexander Moncrieff, we have the most explicit evidence. It was no easy matter for him to set at nought the authority of his church. The step he had taken weighed so heavily on his spirit, as to produce occasional misgivings. In opening his mind to some of his parishioners, in whose piety and intelligence he could confide, he urged them, with great earnestness, to pray for direction to him; and speaking to one of them of the sentence of suspension, he said with tears in his eyes, "They say I must speak no more in his name." The Commission had forbidden him to preach that Christ whom he loved so well, and this was more than his heart could bear.

But since these points have been started, a little more may be said about them. Had the Brethren been in doubt as to the course they had taken,—had subsequent reflection led them to suspect, that they had been chargeable with rashness,—an opportunity of retracing their steps was very seasonably furnished to them. The Assembly, which met in 1734, began to see the impolicy, although not the sinfulness, of the deed done by their Commission; they found that the people, in various parts of the church, were cleaving to the suspended ministers, and blaming the conduct of the Commission, in terms of unsparing severity; and alarmed at this, they instructed the Synod of Perth and Stirling, to restore the whole four to their respective charges, but not to record any opinion about the legality or illegality of the decision they were directed to cancel. This was odd enough; it was in effect a plea of guilty; but whatever may be said of it in other respects, it was an opening made for the suspended brethren, which, in the opinion of many, was wide enough to warrant their return, and which, in point of fact, made some of themselves to hesitate for a little.

Instead of embracing the opening, however, they not only kept their ground, but took steps to fortify and extend it, which led the Assembly formally to depose them, and thus to aggravate the evil which it feared, by giving a new and salutary impulse to the cause of the Secession.

The effect of the deposition on Mr. Moncrieff's mind was relieving rather than otherwise; it went far to extinguish his lingering respect for the decisions of the Assembly; and placed him in a position where he could act, with more than his wonted freedom. Disregarding the deposition he continued to preach in the parish church as heretofore; and the secular authorities were not in haste to take measures for his forcible ejection. It is hinted that they shrunk from the odious task till distinctly given to understand, that, unless they proceeded, complaints would be lodged, which might lead to their own ejection from office. Being at last driven from the church, he continued to preach in the churchyard, till the building, which is still occupied by the congregation, was ready for his reception. A considerable portion of the cost of this building, which is large, substantial, and for its time, commodious, was contributed by Mr. Moncrieff himself: and he took care to secure to the congregation from his own estate, a number of acres of glebe land, to be theirs in perpetuity, on the single condition of their continuing, as a religious body, to hold by the principles of the Secession. As to the stipendiary emolument of the parish, there is the most abundant evidence that he relinquished it without a grudge; for, during the whole of his subsequent ministry, he never took a farthing from his congregation, although their numbers and substance were such, as to enable them to afford him a liberal support. In this, however, his generosity is more to be admired than his foresight. It did not occur to him that his successors, although equally generous with himself,

might not be in circumstances to "wait at the altar" without being "partakers with the altar," nor that to exempt a Christian people from the duty of supporting the ordinances of grace, tends, in all ordinary circumstances, not to promote but rather to hinder the right formation of their Christian character.

After being about seventeen years in the ministry, and ten of these in the Secession, or in February 1742, Mr. Moncrieff was unanimously chosen by his brethren to be their Professor of Divinity, as successor to the venerated Wilson of Perth, whose death had occurred about three months before; and there is reason to believe, that his early education, which had been both liberal and diversified, and was now matured by pastoral experience, contributed not a little to sustain, or to elevate, that tone of evangelical preaching, which from the first had characterized the seceding ministers. It is recorded of him by a very competent judge, who wrote more than forty years ago, and may have been one of his students, that he filled the chair of Divinity "with great ability, zeal, and faithfulness. This," he adds, "was manifested, in the character and usefulness of a great number, who, in the course of twenty years, were trained up by him for the work of the ministry, some of whom are yet alive; but the greater part, having served their generation, are fallen asleep."

Before he entered on this office, as well as afterwards, he had taken a deep interest in the progress of the Secession, exerting himself to the utmost of his power, to meet the new demands for sermon, which were every year increasing, and making journeys to distant places, at not a little toil and expense. Nor was he less active as a member of the Associate Presbytery; but went heartily along with his brethren in all their corporate proceedings. It was by him and Mr. Wilson that the first draught of the Extra-judicial Testimony was prepared for consideration; and in

framing the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, and the Act for Renewing the Covenants, he took his full share. By the first of these Acts, the Presbytery, at once, adopted, defined, and vindicated the views of the Marrow-men, and gave a new impulse to that free, and full, and fervid strain of evangelical preaching, which proved itself, in after years, so extensive a blessing to the people of Scotland. Of the second we cannot speak in terms so complacent; but neither is there room for indiscriminate censure. The National Covenant and the Solemn League embodied an error which our fathers could scarcely have been expected to detect. Nor is there any reason to suppose that we would have detected it, had we lived in their times, or been brought up under their training. Looking back to Moses, and in so far forgetting Christ, our earlier reformers resorted, not merely to ecclesiastical, but to national confederacy, as the likeliest means of securing the good which the Commonwealth had attained, and averting the danger which was still impending. They were the godliest in the land who adopted this expedient; its enemies were, with few exceptions, the carnal and the careless; defection from the Covenant and defection from godliness were, not only supposed, but positively seen to go hand in hand; and it was quite a matter of course, that the Four Brethren, with those who successively adhered to them, honest as they were, and earnest for God, would recur to the Covenant, as in their judgment, a scriptural means, at once of excitement and concentration. They did so, and we honour them in the deed; for if we now know of a more excellent way, it becomes us never to forget, that they were the men who, under God, pointed our way to the mountain top, from whence we have descried it; and as they were true to their light, in the midst of obloquy and privation, so from their tombs there comes a voice, calling upon us to be true to ours.

It was not long after the passing of these "Acts," till the rising community, now so far extended as to be arranged into three presbyteries, under what was thereafter known as the Associate Synod, was broken into two parties of nearly equal strength, by the well known controversy about the lawfulness, or unlawfulness, of swearing certain burgess-oaths. Into the merits of this controversy it were worse than superfluous to enter here, as its olden records are still accessible to those who choose to consult them, while a very judicious and veritable account of it has been recently given to the public.* Our task, however, requires us to say, that Mr. Moncrieff took part in the controversy, and seems to have been active in urging it on. He was keenly opposed to the swearing of the oaths, for reasons which he felt to be strong and convincing. It would appear that he was even a leader among those who were for making a testimony against them a condition of ecclesiastical fellowship. Here, again, he was right and he was wrong. He was right in doing homage to his honest convictions, even by the sacrifice of cherished friendship; and we believe he was right in the view which he took of the merits of the question at issue. But he was wrong—decidedly wrong, and so were all who followed him, especially as adherents to the state-church principle, in taking measures which compelled a separation from those who were cordially at one with him on all the vital points for which they had been hitherto contending. There was mutual wrong in this matter; Christian equanimity was disturbed; controversy, as is often the case, degenerated into strife; the worst things about good men gained their advantage, while the best were, for a time, held in abeyance; and so they parted asunder. The day of this parting was a dark day to the yet infant Seces-

* Historical Sketches *ut supra.*

sion—so dark that some have wished it were blotted out of remembrance. But the wish is vain, and though it were not, there is more of sect than of wisdom in it. Let history tell the tale of the "Breach," and tell it fully out, as a warning to the United Presbyterian Church in years that are yet to come. Nor let it be forgotten that, deplorable as it was, and sulphureous some of its odours, its collisions gave out some sparks of light, which have led us on to a better understanding of the spiritual constitution of the Christian church.

Mr. Moncrieff's secession from the church of his fathers, although marked by a deep conviction of duty, did not induce him to look upon her with indifference or contempt. His confidence in her was gone; but his concern about her lingered and lamented. The corruptions of her judicatories, and the erastian spirit, which from year to year was enthroning itself in her counsels, cost him many an hour of sorrow. By his personal exertions, and in concert with his brethren, he continued to expose those evils, and to point out their disastrous tendency. But he never confounded them with the civil constitution of the country, nor cherished disaffection to the family of Hanover; although, to serve the purposes of spleen, surmises of this kind were industriously circulated. Nay, so ardent was his zeal against the Pretender, that, during the troubles of 1745, he not only prayed for the reigning monarch in the presence of the rebels, but refused to pay with his own hand, or permit any to pay in his name, the cess they were exacting in support of their cause. "When some officers and a party were sent to distrain, he dealt very faithfully with them, and avowed, as the reason of his refusal, that he could not do any thing that would have an appearance of acknowledging their authority or might in any way promote their cause. He laid before them, with great freedom, the

evil of the course they were engaged in, and warned them against it. However, they proceeded in their purpose, and not only took away his cattle and his furniture, but carried off his eldest son to prison, and threatened his life if rescue was attempted; which they were somewhat afraid of, knowing how much the people of the place were exasperated at the treatment given to the family. But none of their plunderings or threatenings could induce Culfargie to any compliance."

About four years after this, or in 1749, he had the comfort of receiving this very son whom the rebels had cast into prison, as his colleague in the charge of the congregation. He continued, however, laboriously engaged in all the parts of his ministry, in teaching the students of divinity three months in the year, and in giving a punctual and exemplary attendance on meetings of Presbytery and Synod. By these labours, and his close application to study, his constitution was worn out, and the infirmities of old age were brought on, at a period of life when many retain considerable vigour. In the summer of 1761, his strength was greatly exhausted; and, though he still continued his public ministrations, so far as his strength would admit, he considered his death to be at no great distance. In August of that year he attended the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Brown of Perth, and on coming into the room where the mourners were assembling, he said to the brethren present, "My brother has got the start of me. It was a question whether he or I would be first removed. The Lord has decided it. He knows who are ripe."

This discovered his apprehension of the near approach of death; and yet his desire for public usefulness continued unabated. About two weeks before his death, he took a journey of forty miles, to prosecute measures he had in view for supporting a weak con-

gregation, which had recently become vacant. In two or three days after his return, an end was put to his labours. He died on the seventh of October, 1761, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and forty-second of his ministry. Twenty-four hours before his death, he ceased to be able to speak so as to be heard or understood; but during the last three hours, he was distinctly heard breathing out praises to God. On the Sabbath after his funeral, his son and successor addressed the people on these very touching words, "His disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Moncrieff was indeed like the martyred Baptist, "a burning and a shining light."

In his domestic relations, this servant of Christ seems to have been peculiarly happy. His first wife —for he was twice married—was Miss Mary Clerk, daughter of Sir John Clerk of Pennycuik, a lady of amiable dispositions and decided piety; which last he regarded as a matter of primary importance in forming a connection so intimate. There are fragments of his handwriting still remaining, although now scarcely legible, which in part show how solicitous he was that his connections in life might tend to promote the efficiency of his ministry. For this he had presented many an earnest prayer; and in Miss Clerk he found the answer of his prayers. She was spared with him, however, for but a few years, during which she bore him three children, namely, Matthew, his successor in the ministry referred to above, and two daughters, who died in their infancy. This marriage was consummated on the 8th of March, 1722, and marked by an incident, which tended to make it instructively memorable. Sir John Clerk, who is said to have been a godly man, had often remarked, in familiar conversation, that it would be a very pleasant thing for a person to fall asleep at night, and not to awake till he found himself in heaven. That very pleasant thing was in reserve for himself.

On the night of the marriage, or the next after it, while the young couple were still in his house, he retired to his bedchamber at the usual hour. Some time after Lady Clerk followed, and wondering, as she entered the room, that she did not hear him breathe, took the candle to look in his face, when she found him quite dead, and lying as if in a pleasant sleep, with his head pillowed on the palm of his hand.

Mr. Moncrieff's second wife was Miss Jane Lyon, daughter of the Rev. William Lyon of Ogle, minister of the parish of Airlie. This lady is also described as a person of much Christian worth, whose sweetness of temper and unaffected piety, proved a very special blessing to her husband and family. She bore to him fifteen children, eight of whom died in their infancy; and she survived him in widowhood for no less a period than thirty years. On his own demise, he left behind him seven children, three sons and four daughters. Matthew, his heir, and colleague in the ministry, a man of prompt and active habits, somewhat eccentric in his cast of mind, and peculiarly effective as a pulpit orator, survived him but a few years, having died in the month of June 1767. William, his second son, was ordained at Alloa in 1749; and, after his father's death, was chosen to be his successor as Professor of Divinity, which office he held till his own death in 1786.

The published works of Mr. Moncrieff are not numerous. During his life, he occasionally published a sermon, as well as a few short treatises, intended to expose prevailing errors, against which he was ever on the alert. A good many years after his death, these, with some additions from his manuscript discourses, were collected and published, in two duodecimo volumes, by his son at Alloa, who has just been referred to. These volumes, while they indicate a respectable share of the scholarship of his times, and familiar acquaintance with divinity as a system, are, upon the whole,

practical in their character, and exhibit throughout a strong attachment to the doctrines of grace, as held and vindicated by the Church of the Secession. Concern for the advancement of vital godliness—a desire for the prosperity of his own church, chiefly as a nursery of godliness—and an apprehension of terrible judgments, coming upon the land for its abounding iniquity —are three things which seem to have been constantly pressing on his mind. They have prominence in almost all his discourses; and if, in some instances, his fears were extreme, they never fail to indicate the tenderness of his conscience, and a cordial self-devotion to the cause of the Redeemer.

A fair portraiture of Mr. Moncrieff, as he lived and moved among men on the earth, cannot now be given. We know enough to awaken interest, but not enough to meet its demands. Nor, indeed, would bare facts, although we could certify them more extensively, be found sufficient for the task. There was a raciness about the living man, if waning tradition can be trusted, and a peculiarity of minor feature, which would have required an intimate contemporary, and that contemporary skilled in limning, to bring them out with adequate effect. He seems to have possessed a happy combination of practical thinking, ardour of feeling, and promptitude in action, which fitted him very peculiarly for the work of his day; and he rose to his eminence, less by the strength of his intellect, than by the frank, open, and manly sincerity which met the eyes of all who knew him. What he judged to be right he set himself to prosecute, with a zeal and determination not easily checked; and when opposition beset his path, especially from quarters unexpected, the restraints of moderation were sometimes apt to be overlooked. His promptitude withal made him a reprover where others would scarcely have ventured on reproof; while the sanctity of his character gave him a power, which even

the profane could not easily resist. It is talked of as a specimen of what frequently occurred, that meeting a country gentleman of his acquaintance, who had just set out on a Sabbath-breaking excursion, he rebuked him in terms more definite than smooth. The gentleman took it amiss, and angrily put the question, "Who gave you a right to impede my movements?" To which Mr. Moncrieff replied, "You will learn that at the day of judgment," and instantly walked off. The words took effect. The gentleman, after pausing for a little, gave up his amusement and returned to his home.

He was the lion of the Four Brethren, as the more calculating Wilson had jocularly called him—a man whose spirit was so resolute and daring, that he was much more likely to commit an imprudence than to compromise his sense of duty. It is not denied that his peculiar temperament, especially in the earlier part of his life, occasionally betrayed him into fits of passion; but of this infirmity no one was more sensible than himself. It led him out to constant watchfulness, with many a self-abasing prayer; and it is said that, in his riper years, his victory over it was all but complete. The warmth of his heart, as a matter of course, was poured into his manner of preaching, which is said to have been fluent, animated, and striking, well fitted to arrest attention, and to interest the heart in the message from heaven. Although careful in his preparations for the pulpit, he was not in the habit of rigidly adhering to his notes, but took advantage of what was suggested by the excitement of delivery. Indeed, he seems to have been addicted to off-hand remarks, both in the pulpit and out of it, some of which are still rehearsed by the descendants of those who knew him. It is told, for instance, that when he preached at Perth on a certain occasion, in what is still called the Glovers' Yard—the place where the

Seceders met for worship before a church was built for them—and that when, after the concluding psalm was sung, he rose to pronounce the blessing, he looked for a moment at the multitudes who had been listening to him so eagerly, and joining so heartily in the song of praise, and then addressed them thus:—"My friends, I shall tell you one thing before I dismiss you, and that is, that if the thorns of the state were as sharp-pointed as the thorns of the kirk, there are some of you here to-day who would have been singing psalms in heaven."

The young of Mr. Moncrieff's flock were the objects of his special care. In both his public and his private addresses, he seldom forgot to have a word for them; and, taught by his own experience the advantages of early piety, he was anxious to see them brought to Christ, while yet their hearts were tender, and their hands comparatively unpractised in the works of the flesh. We have already seen that his heart was free from the love of "filthy lucre;" and that he merged the country gentleman in the laborious Christian minister was manifest to all. The ordinary expedients for improving his estate, and thereby increasing the wealth of his family, received but little of his attention. When a friend was pointing out to Matthew, his oldest son and heir, certain improvements which were desirable, and suggesting that, if his father would resort to them, they would give to the whole estate, or to the portion of it particularly referred to, quite a new appearance, Matthew replied with considerable emphasis, "*New!* my father cares for nothing new except the new covenant."

But the most remarkable feature of his character, and that which armed him with most of his power, was a deep-toned devotional spirit. All that has come down to us respecting him, whether recorded or oral, represents him as eminently a man of prayer. Every

thing which presented the least dubiety, or gave him unusual pain or pleasure, was with him an errand to the throne of grace. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," was remarkably the motto of his life: and he had his reward; for, although his troubles were not few, yet in the midst of them all, and upon the whole, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding kept his heart and mind, through Christ Jesus." Not only was it his practice to engage in secret prayer three times every day, "morning, evening, and at noon;" but he was observed to retire for this exercise, at other times, as incident or inclination gave him the impulse. He could not live without prayer; and when opportunity of retirement was denied him, he had recourse to ejaculation. Even when in company, it was no rare thing for him to rise from his seat, and take a few steps through the room, or to stand before the window, as if looking out, that unobserved he might pour out his heart before God. The story of the woman, who, at one of these pauses, in the middle of a sermon, whispered to the person beside her in the pew, "See! Culfargie is away to heaven, and has left us all sitting here," is more likely than otherwise to be strictly true; and there is no lack of other anecdotes, the very existence of which, although they cannot now be formally authenticated, may be regarded as characteristic, and tend at once to illustrate and verify the statements which have just been made.

Such was Alexander Moncrieff, a father and founder of the Secession Church. He is not held up to the view of posterity as a man of brilliant genius, nor as possessed of extraordinary skill in science or literature, nor yet, as in every thing, above the influence of prejudice or mistake. But let posterity be told, that he was an honest man—a spiritually-minded man—a

disinterested man—a man devoted to the service of Christ—a Christian hero—a man who, as much as any of his Brethren, if not more than any one of them, counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;—a man, in short, who, taken altogether, was singularly qualified, in head and in heart, by the God of nature and the God of grace, for the position which was assigned to him. Nor, in these days of comparative refinement, let it be forgotten by our living ministers, that the specific Christian virtues which, amidst some acknowledged defects, shone so conspicuously in their father at Culfargie, are absolutely indispensable to the continued prosperity of the United Presbyterian Church. Some other things may be dispensed with; but these can never be dispensed with. Some other things may be polished away; but these ought never to be polished away. Talents, and learning, and administrative wisdom, and tact in argument, and ornate address, have each its measure of value, and let no man despise them. But they are ever to be regarded as secondary things—as accessaries rather than essentials—as the instrument rather than the operator—as the body rather than the soul of the true Christian ministry,—and unless they be all seasoned with piety—a constantly cherished and presiding piety,—a piety which takes its fire from the cross, and is kept in glow by the efficacy of the cross —the church may sink into dismal degeneracy, while they are cultivated and loudly extolled. "Not by might, nor by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

PRINCIPLE RULE, AND END

OF

MORAL ACTIONS;

WHEREIN

THE SCHEME OF SELFISH LOVE, LAID DOWN BY MR. ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN ST. ANDREW'S, IN HIS 'INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGINAL OF MORAL VIRTUE,' IS EXAMINED, AND THE RECEIVED DOCTRINE IS VINDICATED.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,—heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.—2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 4.

AN INQUIRY, ETC.

INTRODUCTION.

The present modish turn of religion looks as if we began to think that we have no need of a Mediator, but that all our concerns were to be managed with God, as an absolute God. The religion of nature is the darling topic of our age; and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that light. All that is peculiar to the Christian religion, and everything concerning Christ that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is waved, and banished, and despised by too many. Even moral duties themselves, which are essential to the very being of Christianity, are harangued upon, without any reference to Christ; are placed in his room, and urged upon principles and with views ineffectual to secure their practice; and more suited to the sentiments and temper of a heathen, than of those who take the whole of their religion from Christ.

The sufficiency of the light of nature is warmly contended for, even by those who do not profess to reject revelation; and most of the doctrines of Scripture have been given up by some who yet declare that the Bible is their religion. It is therefore necessary to stand up for the honour of the great God, against those who set their bewildered reason, and proud conceits, above the dictates of infinite wisdom.

The reader may judge for himself how far Mr. Campbell has adopted these modish principles: and that he may have a view of the scheme of principles, which he has propagated with so much zeal and industry, I shall transcribe the propositions he endeavours to confirm in his writings lately published, in the terms in which he has thought fit to express himself: and shall at present only take notice of such propositions as express his sentiments concerning what he calls natural religion.

In his *discourse*, proving that the apostles were no enthusiasts, and in his *preface* thereto prefixed, he lays down the following principles: *viz.* That "the laws of nature (*i. e.* natural religion) are, in themselves, a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness;"* and that "supernatural light is however *necessary* or *fit* to give them sufficient information of the law of nature, in its full compass and latitude, and of all things that are necessary to work upon their passions, in order to engage them to observe it carefully."† That "our observing of the law of nature, is the great mean or instrument of our real and lasting felicity."‡ And that "men may very well, in a natural course and series of things, attain such manifestations of the nature and excellencies of God, as are necessary to engage them to love and admire him, without any more immediate interposing of the Divinity, than there is when a man opens his eyes, and beholds the sun at noon-day, and feels an agreeable warmth spreading itself through his whole body."§

He proceeds, in another || discourse, to give us a more full account of his opinion; in which he tells us, in the first place, that he agrees with the author of *Christianity as old as the creation*, in thinking, "that natural religion stands on these natural principles, as its peculiar foundations; namely, that God is, and governs the world by his providence; that the soul is immortal; and that all men,

* Preface, p. 6. † Ibid. p. 7. ‡ Ibid. p. 6.
§ Discourse, pp. 1, 2. || Oratio de vanitate luminis naturæ.

of whatsoever condition, shall be rewarded or punished in the next life after this."* He adds, in the same place, that "the law, or religion of nature, consists in those duties, which, because they are founded on, and derived from nature, we are obliged to pay to God and men: all which duties," he says, "we are to perform to this end, that we may recommend ourselves to God; and that, having spent our whole lives in a careful observance of them, we may attain everlasting life with God in heaven." And, in the following page, he gives it as his opinion, that "all the welfare and happiness of rational minds is comprehended in the duties of natural religion."

In order to show, that while natural religion is a *sufficient* rule to direct mankind to happiness, yet revelation is *fit* or *necessary* to give them sufficient information of the law of nature, in its full compass and latitude, he attempts to prove, "that men, by the mere light of nature, without revelation or tradition, are not able to arrive at the knowledge of the being and existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul."†

Since these discourses were sent abroad into the world, he has published a new edition of his *Enquiry into the origin of moral virtue.* In this treatise, he takes in all those natural principles, upon which he asserts, in his former discourse, that natural religion stands as the foundation of virtue; namely, that God is, and governs the world by his providence: that the soul is immortal; and that all men, of whatsoever condition, shall be rewarded or punished in the life which is to come.‡ And from his supposed leading principle of *self-love*, he derives all acts of piety towards God, or of justice and charity towards men.§ So that we have here a complete system of natural religion, which Mr. Campbell has composed, by the assistance of revelation or tradition; and which he has declared, both in this, and in his other performances, to be sufficient to entail upon

* Oratio de vanitate luminis naturæ, pp. 4, 5. † Ibid. pp. 26. 27. 32.
‡ Enquiry into the origin of moral virtue, pp. 63. 79.
§ Ibid. pp. 111. 124.

us, if duly observed, both real and lasting felicity, in recommending ourselves to the favour of God, and attaining everlasting life with him in heaven.

I have formerly made some reflections on his first two discourses; and seeing he has, in a Christian society, and though clothed with a sacred character, taken it upon him to recommend to the world a visionary scheme of his own, as sufficient, if practised, to entitle mankind to future and lasting felicity; it is necessary to examine his sentiments by the Scriptures of truth, the only test and infallible standard of faith and manners. It were an unnecessary labour to trace him in all the periods of such a verbose discourse; which, however, might be so managed, as to expose every particular branch of his hypothesis to the just resentment of every sober mind, were it worth either the reader's while, or mine, to employ ourselves in such a manner. I shall therefore confine myself to these few things, as the subject of the following sections. 1. To show that self-love is not, nor ought to be, the leading principle of moral virtue. 2. That self-interest, or pleasure, is not the only standard by which we can, and should judge of the virtue of our own, and others' actions; or that actions are not to be called virtuous, on account of their correspondency to self-interest. 3. That self-love, as it exerts itself in the desire of universal unlimited esteem, ought not to be the great commanding motive to virtuous actions: nor is obtaining the good-liking and esteem of those beings, among whom we are mixed, to be our main end in pursuing them. This will be sufficient to answer my design, which is to vindicate the truths of God, against the principles laid down in his scheme of selfish love.

SECTION I.

WHEREIN IT IS MADE APPEAR, THAT SELF-LOVE IS NOT, NOR OUGHT TO BE, THE LEADING PRINCIPLE OF MORAL VIRTUE.

Our author tells us, "That it is very certain, that all men have implanted in their nature a principle of self-love or preservation, that irresistibly operates upon us in all instances whatsoever; and is the great cause, or the first spring of all our several motions and actions, which way soever they may happen to be directed:"* that "self-love lies always at the bottom of every rational mind, and is universally the first spring that awakes her powers, and begins her motions, and carries her on to action."† He adds, "When you apprehend the Deity under these ideas, that promise you so much advantage, so as to refuse to worship him, unless he presents himself thus favourably inclined to your interest, and studious of your happiness; pray, what is the generous principle that determines you? I see nothing here that has the least semblance of your being disinterested. Give me leave to say, this is a sufficient demonstration to me; and I suppose, to every body else; that, even in matters of devotion, you are absolutely governed by self-interest."‡ And elsewhere,§ he inserts on the margin a citation from Arrian, in which he brings him in, saying, *That when the gods appear to cross us, and mar our self-interest, we throw down their image-houses, and burn their temples:* and he expressly says, in that place, "that he owns every thing in that citation, as his principles." Having thus presented our Author's sentiments, in this particular, in his own words, which he attempts to

* Enquiry into the origin of moral virtue, p. 4. † Ibid p. 101.
‡ Ibid. p. 460. § Ibid. pp. 454, 455.

establish in his prolix performance, I shall next proceed to fix the true state of the question.

As to which it may be noticed, that the question is not, Whether self-interest be a motive of our obedience to God; or of moral virtue, as he calls it? This is owned on all hands. God has implanted in us a principle of self-preservation; and we may laudably have a respect to the recompence of the reward. But the question is, Whether self-love be the first spring, or leading principle of virtuous actions? and, Whether self-interest be the highest motive of our obedience to God? Mr. Campbell holds the affirmative, and I the negative, in the present question.

Here I must likewise observe, that though Mr. Campbell begs his reader not to regard him as either Jew or Christian, but as some heathen philosopher; yet we must in charity think, that the principles maintained in this book are truly his sentiments; and, in his opinion, agreeable to all the principles of religion, whether natural or revealed; unless we are to suppose him to believe, and to propagate, with a great deal of industry, "a scheme of principles directly opposite to his Christian creed."

It is evident, from his Preface, that he recommends moral philosophy as that which ought to be the main study of a Christian divine, next to the holy Scriptures: and pretends, that it is the great, and chief business of ministers, to preach * it to their people. Nay, seeing he has composed a system of this kind, and expresses a fond concern for its being valued at a high rate by all who shall peruse it; we must conclude, that, in his opinion, it is very proper for students to form themselves upon this performance; and to make it their main work, when they shall happen to be invested with a sacred character, to preach its morality to those under their pastoral charge. All which, with what I have observed in the introduction, gives sufficient ground to call it immediately to the bar of the sacred oracles; and, according as it is found to

* Preface to his Enquiry, pp. 22, 23.

agree to that infallible standard, let a judgment be formed about it.

I begin, with endeavouring to show, in this section, 1. That a pretence to make self-love, interest, and pleasure, the first spring and principle of moral virtue, is condemned by the Holy Scriptures, which set our obedience to God upon a quite other foundation. 2. That this notion of the first rise of moral virtue is contrary to the plainest principles of reason. 3. That it has no manner of countenance from the writings of the more judicious and thinking part of the heathen philosophers, who have expressed quite other sentiments upon this subject.

I. If we consult the sacred records upon this question, we are assured from them, that the Holy Spirit doth renew our natures by regenerating grace; and that this new nature is the principle of all holy and spiritual actions: which might be illustrated and confirmed at great length, from John iii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 17. 2 Pet. i. 4. Jer. xxiv. 7. and xxxi. 33.

Nay, what true virtue can we reasonably expect to find among mankind, in their present circumstances of sin and guilt? If we pay a due regard to divine revelation, we must believe that the apostle Paul gives a just character of them, when he tells us, that they cannot please God; that they are alienated from the Author of their being, through their blindness of mind, and enmity of heart; and are indisposed for living to his glory, as their end, and for moving to the enjoyment of him, as the centre of their happiness. From which it is very manifest, that whatever external conformity the actions of men, in an unregenerate state, may carry to the letter of the law; and however useful this conformity may be to themselves or to society; yet it can neither be acceptable to God, nor recommend men to his favour; as Mr. Campbell has confidently alleged upon this argument See Rom. viii. 7, 8. Eph. iv. 18. Prov. xxi. 17.

God himself has declared it to be his method of proceeding with us in the new covenant, that he giveth us new

hearts, and writeth his laws in them: and that the effect of this internal change is, our walking in his statutes, and our keeping his judgments, and doing them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26: that is, we are led, in this way, to reform our lives, and yield all holy obedience unto God.

We know, from the sacred oracles, that Adam, the first man, was created in the image of God, before he had done any good action, or was capable of performing it; and we are likewise assured, that mankind, in their present lapsed state, are destitute of the image of God, which consists in the rectitude of the whole soul, and in the powers and abilities that were necessary for that obedience God required of them. This makes it certain, according to the saying of our Lord and Saviour, that "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" and that before men, in their present state of sin and guilt, can perform actions acceptable to God, a new principle of spiritual life must be infused into their souls by the divine Spirit; which, in the nature of the thing, must be a principle and spring of action of a very different kind from the corrupt self-love of mankind in their present situation.

Though it can be demonstrated, that self-love neither was, nor could have been the leading principle of moral virtue, according to the original frame of human nature; yet it were idle to digress to a question that cannot be in the field, as matters now stand. Mr. Campbell's system of moral philosophy is composed for the benefit of mankind in their present circumstances; and, as such recommended by him to the students, to whom he says in the plainest terms,* "That, by performing the duties of natural religion, we are recommended to the favour of God; that, having spent our lives in the observance of them, we may attain everlasting life with him in heaven:" and that, "all the welfare and happiness of rational minds is comprehended in the duties of natural religion." These opinions he delivers in his discourse, designed for the refuta-

* Oratio, &c. pp. 4, 5.

tion of the deists, who contend for the sufficiency of natural religion, in the present situation of mankind!

I am not to canvass Mr. Campbell's sentiments as to this article of the Christian creed, whether he believes mankind to be in a state of guilt and universal corruption or not: it no way affects my argument. I have elsewhere proved it from the Holy Scriptures,* that they are in a state of entire depravation: and this, as has been there observed, has been acknowledged by the wisest among the heathen, and by the deists themselves. It being therefore certain, that the self-love of mankind, in their present circumstances, is corrupted and depraved; it can with no show of reason be pretended, that a vitious, inordinate passion, can possibly be the first spring and principle of all virtuous actions.

If Mr. Campbell pretend, that it is not a vitious self-love, but self-love duly qualified, as having a chief regard to God, as the head of human society, which is the principle of moral virtue; then he must acknowledge, that our love is either virtuous or vitious, according as God is, or is not, preferred to the creature; which is the same, as to say, that supreme love to God is the first principle of moral virtue; an opinion which I do not oppose. Or his meaning must be that it is upon the account of our own self-interest, and not for his divine excellency and authority, that a chief regard is to be had to the Most High; and then, according to him, the morality of the love proceeds from a higher regard to self-interest, than to God; and the infinite God is made a subordinate to self and self-interest: which is the opinion I contend against, maintaining that self-love, considered in this view, is a most vitious and inordinate passion, and cannot possibly be the principle of any virtuous action whatsoever.

But, to proceed: The morality which Mr. Campbell would have the students of divinity instructed in, that, in imitation of him, they may preach it in Christian congre-

* A review and examination of Mr. Campbell's principles, &c.

gations, being moral philosophy; it must exhibit such a kind of moral virtue, as bears no relation to Christ, or to the grace and operations of the divine Spirit: for all are agreed, that philosophy, or the bare light of nature, doth not present moral virtue in this view: and, if he had taken up moral virtue in this light, it cannot easily be accounted for, that in so large a treatise, he should not so much as have once attempted to show the defects of philosophical morality, or its difference from gospel obedience, that students, as well as others, might not be led into pernicious mistakes.

But Christian morality, in my opinion, has alone the just claim to be preached in Christian congregations. It proceeds from a regenerating work of the divine Spirit, which is altogether unknown in philosophical morality: and it is likewise the fruit of Christ's purchase and merit. Hence our Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth," John xvii. 19. He prevails for the communication of it, by his intercession within the vail: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," John xvii. 17. Thus the gospel of Christ, with the moral law ingrafted into it, is the rule and measure of our obedience, or holy walking with God. The moral law, or the law of nature, in its full compass and latitude, as it is contained in the word, was the *rule of original holiness* and *obedience:* but it is not the adequate rule of that holiness whereunto we are restored by Christ. The *law of nature*, in its greatest latitude, cannot reveal Christ, nor those treasures of grace which are in him, for enabling us, by daily communications of light and life from him, to "perfect holiness in the fear of God:" nor can it direct to faith in him, which is the first spring of all virtuous actions; and, as such, is celebrated by the apostle Paul, at great length, in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews.

The obedience that is accepted with God, is the obedience of faith, Rom. i. 5. Heb. xi. 6: thence it springs; and therewith it is animated. Our Lord Jesus Christ affirms,

that men are sanctified by the faith that is in him, Acts xxvi. 18. From which it is plain, that there is no other way to attain to that holiness, by which we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; seeing it is by faith our hearts are purified, and not otherwise; and where the heart is not purified, there can be no obedience acceptable unto God, nor any fellowship with him.

It is the peculiar glory of Christian morality, or gospel holiness, that it "is our being conformed to the image of the Son of God: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. To this end, among others, is he set before us by the gospel, in the holiness of his person, the glory of his graces, and the beneficence and usefulness of his conversation in the world; that we may imitate him, as the great pattern and example of holiness. As it is a foolish imagination, that the only end of his life and death, was to exemplify and confirm his doctrine; so to neglect to consider him, as our example, or to refuse to imitate him as such, is most vile and pernicious. And if Mr. Campbell had paid a due regard to the Scriptures, which alone give us a right notion of true morality; had he kept his eye upon the example of our Lord, that noble pattern of exalted virtue, with that veneration which became him, he had not amused the world with his imaginary scheme of philosophical morality; nor asserted it to be the great and chief business of ministers to preach such a system to their people. Nor yet would he have talked in the manner he has done, of the noble sentiments, and heroical actions, of heathen philosophers; it being easy to show how dim their light was, and that their fairest virtues were blended with the foulest of vices. But we have a Saviour that is full of grace and truth; and certainly we had all the greatest need of grace and truth. For whatever fond conceits some entertain of the sufficiency of the religion of nature, regarding the religion of Jesus Christ only for the sake of it, or so far as it carries on the light of nature: yet it is manifest, that the whole human race was miser-

ably fallen into the deadly darkness of iniquity and error; a darkness that did still increase upon them, and out of which they never could be able to extricate themselves: for, even "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," Rom. i. 21, 22. This darkness had everywhere spread itself through the earth; as the apostle Paul does prove at length, in his epistle to the Romans, and as the history of the gospel plainly shows us. It is in Christ alone, that we have a full provision made for our deliverance out of this wretched state.

As to our author's celebrated heroes, Socrates and Plato, what the apostle Paul has said of the heathens, in general, held true of them; "That God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is God, blessed for ever." They who have considered the broad hints that are given in their writings, of their being under the power of these vile affections, must have less sense than charity, if they can regard the apologies some have attempted to make for them as of any value. What weight can be attached to the sayings of men who, in practice, conformed to the idolatry and superstition of the country in which they lived? An instance of this we have in Socrates; who, with his last breath, used this mean expression; "Crito, We are indebted a cock to Æsculapius; offer it, and do not forget."

But further, as Christian morality is the fruit of Christ's purchase and intercession; and as his word is the rule and measure of it, and his example its complete pattern: so we are animated to pursue a course of virtuous actions, by daily supplies of grace from Christ, "who is given to be head over all things to the church; which is his body," Eph. i. 22. It hath been always granted, by

such as acknowledge the divine person of the Son of God, that he is the head of his church; namely, that he is the political head of it in a way of government, and the spiritual head, as to vital influences of grace unto all his members. The church of Rome, indeed, cast some disturbance on the former, by interposing another immediate governing head between him and the catholic church: yet they do not deny, but that the Lord Christ is, in his own person, the absolute supreme king and head of the church. The latter is refused by the Socinians, and others who go their way, because they deny his divine person. But by all others who profess the Christian religion, this hath hitherto been acknowledged: and it is most evidently expressed in several places of scripture. The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, assures us, in the strongest language, that as, in the natural body, there are supplies of nourishment, and natural spirits communicated from the head unto the members; so, from Christ, the head of the church; which he is as God man, there is a supply of spiritual life made unto every member of his mystical body. He also says, that Christians, "Speaking the truth in love, grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." See 1 Cor. xii. 12. Eph. iv. 15. Col. ii. 19. John xv. and xiv. 19. Eph. iv. 15, 16.

Our Lord Jesus Christ hath encouraged us to expect and depend upon assistances of this kind, by his own gracious word of promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. He is said to be "our life," Col. iii. 3; and we are said to "receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace," John i. 15. To the same purpose the apostle expresseth the matter, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal.

ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ:" that is, as if he had said, The death of Christ hath a mortifying influence upon the corruptions of my heart and nature. Christ died to expiate sin; we die to sin when we mortify it: but adds he, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God:" that is, I live a holy spiritual life: yet I do not lead that life, considered in myself, and what I am by nature; for my motions as a Christian, are not according to my natural propensions and inclinations, but Christ, by his Spirit, liveth in me, having renewed and changed my heart, and infused spiritual dispositions into my soul; so that I am enabled, by a principle of faith, acting upon the Son of God, in his person, offices, and mediation, to order my whole conversation, according to the will of God, revealed in his word.

I shall not at present enlarge upon the relation which Christian morality bears to the Divine Spirit, having given some hints in what has been said, and treated, at some length, of the necessity of regeneration in a former discourse.

Yet I cannot but observe, upon the whole, that the philosophical morality, recommended by Mr. Campbell, is something very foreign to the Scriptures of truth. Christian morality, as has been shown, bears a relation to Christ, and the Divine Spirit: but philosophical morality can have no such respect to these glorious persons of the adorable Trinity, seeing the doctrines concerning their operations, in the method of salvation, are peculiar to revealed religion; and are not in the least hinted at by our author, though a Christian divine, in his whole scheme of moral philosophy. Mr. Campbell's philosophical morality takes its rise from his love to himself; but Christian morality proceeds from the knowledge and love of God: his philosophical morality springs from a corrupt and inordinate self-love; but Christian morality proceeds from a new nature, and the image of God restored in the soul of a lapsed creature, by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and from faith in the

Son of God, as its first spring and principle. Seeing then that the above propositions have been made evident, from the word of God, it will be very manifest to every one that pays a due regard to the sacred oracles, how silly a figure this new philosophy does make, when it is viewed in scripture light; and that it can never possibly answer the ends proposed by its author of recommending men to the favour of God, and entitling them to future and lasting felicity.

II. But, to proceed: Since Mr. Campbell enrols himself among the high pretenders to reason in these days, it will be fit to examine if this, his principle, be agreeable to the common reason of mankind.

It is most agreeable, in my opinion, to all the principles of sound reason, that rational creatures be animated in a course of virtue, by the knowledge and love of the Deity, the great Author of their being, as the ruling motive of all their actions. For it is very manifest, that the duty of glorifying God, or celebrating his infinite perfections, is founded in the nature of God, and the relation creatures stand in to the Author of their being; and that it is impossible, in the nature of the thing, that a reasonable creature, remaining in a state of integrity, can fail to promote this great and noble end of its being and existence; because an holy and innocent creature cannot possibly contemplate infinite wisdom, power, goodness, and holiness, without supreme love and esteem, the most humble adoration, and most accented praises.

Mr. Campbell has had the assurance to express himself in a very extravagant manner, maintaining, "That we may refuse to worship God, unless he present himself favourably inclined to our interest, and studious of our happiness." Again he tells us, "That, by our happiness, he understands future and lasting felicity, universal and immortal fame and renown, and God's expressing his love and esteem of us, in such instances, as are fully proportionated to our natural principle of self-love."*

* Enquiry, &c. pp. 460. and 76. 83. 86. 94. Preface to his discourse, p. 6.

This bold assertion, that we are not obliged to worship God, that is, to esteem, love, or obey him, unless he conferred upon us an immortal fame and renown, and a future and lasting felicity, had need, I think, to have been well established by solid arguments, when it was confidently published to the world by its author: for, if he fail in the proof of it, he may be found guilty, of what will be constructed, by all sober minds, to be a reproaching of his Maker, in whose hands his breath is, and to whom he must account for the whole of his conduct. For my part, I see no shadow of proof, either for this, or his other opinions, in all his wordy performance; and therefore, till he produce a claim of right to future and lasting felicity, and to universal and immortal fame and renown, that is not founded in the free condescension, will, and good pleasure of God, I cannot vindicate him from the charge of having, in this particular, made sadly too free with the great Author of his existence.

But, to set this matter in a true light, we may consider, that our worshipping God is a necessary duty, founded upon the precept and law of God, which is an emanation from his holiness, wisdom, and dominion over his creatures: whereas the eternal felicity of a dependent being, is a privilege voluntarily bestowed, and hath its rise in divine goodness or bounty, which is free in its egress. Whosoever will consider the nature of God, and the necessary condition of a creature, cannot, with reason, think, that eternal life is, of itself, due from God, as a recompence to him for his obedience. Who can think so great a reward due, for the simple performance of the creature's duty? God owes nothing to the holiest creature. What he gives is a present from his bounty; not the reward of merit: "for who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" What obligation could there be from the creature, to confer a goodness on him, to this or that degree, for this or that duration? If God had never created man or angel, he had done them no wrong; and if he had taken away their being, after a time, when he had

answered his end, he had done them no injury.* For what law obliged him to continue them in that being wherein he had invested them, but his mere good pleasure?

Although it is owned, that, in all ages of the world, men have had a strong hankering after immortality; yet this is only an evidence that God designed that they should exist beyond the grave; but not that they stood entitled to future and lasting felicity, from the nature and relation of things, independently of his own free purpose and will. For the same power that gave them a being, could have produced them, without any appetite of that nature and kind. And though it was this appetite which gave life and spirit to all the reasonings of the philosophers on this subject, and was itself one of the best arguments of the soul's immortality within their reach; yet so conscious were mankind, that a future and lasting state of felicity was a privilege that depended on the divine will, favour, and bounty, that Socrates himself, notwithstanding all the arguments by which he endeavours to encourage his hopes, speaks doubtfully about it in the very last moments of his life: as might be shown, from his own words, if I could take the time to mark them down in this place.

It is true, we know, from revelation, that God will not deprive any rational creature of its being and existence: but can it be shown to be so inconsistent with his wisdom, that he cannot do it if he will? Though he withdraw that being he has given to some creatures, his power can raise up others of the same, or nobler faculties, to answer the ends of his glory. And none can prove, but that it might have been agreeable to God's wisdom, in this manner, to manifest his sovereignty over the works of his hands, if he had thought fit to do so. It cannot be shown, that divine goodness may not possibly stop short of an eternal reward to an innocent creature, and think a less reward sufficient: and, though justice requires, that an innocent creature shall not be punished, by being made miserable; yet it

* Mr. Boyle's Excellency of Theology, pp. 25, 26.

doth not require, that God shall be obliged to continue that creature in unending existence.

Now, seeing it is very manifest, that the most innocent creature cannot possibly produce a claim to everlasting felicity, except what is founded upon, and must be resolved into the pleasure, free-will, and bounty of God; must it not be an arrogant thing for those, whose foundation is in the dust, to talk at this rate, that they would pay no homage or worship to the great God, if he refused to bestow upon them so great a reward? How visionary must that scheme be, which strikes at the first principles of reason, and cannot subsist one moment, but by banishing from among men all due regard for the rights of the Deity?

But, further, I hope Mr. Campbell will acknowledge, that himself, and all other men, are now in a lapsed state. If he refuse it, his writings will prove it: heathen philosophers have acknowledged it; and the deists themselves have confessed it. But natural conscience must dictate to every man, that sinful creatures, who are in a lapsed state, have forfeited all title to happiness; and are obnoxious to justice, for violating the law of God. This might be confirmed, by a variety of proofs from pagan writers, as well as illustrated from the principles of reason itself. For however some may amuse themselves with the notion of God's benevolence, yet this will yield little comfort to the person who is convinced of sin. Justice being provoked, right reason, if we attend to it, will convince us, that it must be satisfied, the honour of God's law vindicated, and his hatred at sin manifested, before goodness is extended to the guilty.

It is farther to be remarked that, as the whole writings of pagan philosophers, notwithstanding the assistances some of them had from revelation, discover their absolute ignorance of the way in which God was to be reconciled unto sinners; so this is a plain argument, among others, that the restoring of lapsed man to the favour of God, and to future and lasting felicity, had its rise from grace, or the free will and purpose of God; and that therefore God,

if he had thought meet so to do, might have left them all to perish in their sins, without any prospect of felicity. Will our author, then, take it upon him to say, that if mercy had not interposed in the manner it did, mankind had been loosed from all obligation to obey their Creator? that man, by his sin, had exempted himself from the government of God? that the law of God had lost its binding power, because man, by his rebellion, had lost the prospect of future and lasting felicity? and that man, in these circumstances, might have laudably hated, reproached, and blasphemed the Author of his being? These are vile and impious suppositions; and the scheme, from which they follow, must be absurd in itself, and subversive of all religion, whether natural or revealed.

III. Before I conclude this section, I must examine into the sentiments of our author's celebrated writers. And, if it be found that he has outdone his fellow-heathens upon this argument, notwithstanding of his being a Christian divine, I do not well know how he shall answer for it at his next conversation with them.

The noblest sentiments that I can observe to have been delivered by heathen philosophers upon this subject, are these of Pythagoras, Plato, and some others,* namely, "That it is our end to be like God; and that conformity to God is the chief good." And Hierocles, cited by our author, says, That "virtue being the image of God in a rational soul, as every image must have a pattern for its subsistence; so, whatever is acquired as virtuous, must refer to God, as our great pattern, in the acquisition of virtue; otherwise it is only an imposture, and can have no value."

Now, if God be considered as our great pattern, and virtue as his image and likeness in a rational soul, this will give us the notion of quite another principle and end of virtuous actions, than our self-love, interest, or pleasure: for, if moral virtue is considered in this light, then God's

* Stanley's Lives, page 541.

love to himself, and to his creatures, is the great pattern of our love to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow-men. As it proceeds from the infinite perfection of the Deity, that he loves himself in a supreme manner, and that it is his peculiar glory to do so; so, on the other hand, it proceeds from the finite and limited perfection of his creature, and its universal dependence on him, that it ought to love God more than itself. God can love nothing above himself and his own glory; because there is nothing so good or so great, or so truly lovely, as himself. And, for the same reason, his love to his creatures must be for his own sake, or according as some resemblance of himself, the great pattern and standard of beauty and perfection, appears in them. Thus, our love to God must be supreme, and for his own sake; that is, for his glorious excellencies and perfections: and our love to ourselves, and our fellow-men, must be on God's account, and as the rays of the divine image do appear in them.

This I take to be a just sentiment, and the true notion of moral virtue; and I hope Mr. Campbell will agree with me, that we ought to love God for himself, and that in a superlative manner; that we ought to love our fellow-men for God's sake: and that he will not adventure any more either to say that he loves himself more than the great God, or that he loves every thing else, only for his own sake.

As this view of moral virtue is founded in the plain and evident principles of reason; so it follows, by a native and immediate consequence from it, that the knowledge and love of God must be the leading principle of all moral actions: which is the doctrine I do herein maintain and defend.

Nay more, seeing moral virtue consists in the imitation of God, he that would live in the image of God, must imprint upon his mind the most exalted idea, and the highest esteem possible, of the holiness, the righteousness, the moral perfection of the divine nature; that in this way he may awaken all the powers of his soul, to be formed to

actions, worthy of the infinite Original; and can it be possible, but that in so doing, self, and every created being, must sink infinitely low in the view of the man employed in so noble an exercise?

We cannot possibly imitate this great pattern of exalted virtue, without supreme love and admiration. The more adoring thoughts we have of God, the more delightfully we shall aspire to, and catch after any thing that may promote the full draught of his image in our hearts. When the soul is ravished with the contemplation of God's holiness, goodness, justice, righteousness, and truth, it will desire to be like him, more than to have its own being continued to it; and it will delight in its own existence, chiefly in order to this heavenly and spiritual work. The impressions of the nature of God upon it, and the imitations of the nature of God by it, will be more desirable than any other conceivable good.

Then if God himself be our pattern, he must, in order to this, be our end. Every man's mind forms itself to a likeness to that which it makes its chief end. The same characters that are upon the thing aimed at, will be imprinted upon the spirit of him that aims at it; even as the ambitious man thinks himself equal to the honour he reaches after. Thus, when God and his glory are made our end, we shall find a silent likeness pass in upon us; and the beauty of God will, by degrees, enter upon our souls.

As Plutarch saith, God is angry with those that imitate his thunder or lightning, his works of majesty; but delighted with those that imitate his virtue. They, however, who make self-love the spring, centre, and end of all their actions, set themselves in the temple of God, and lift up themselves above all that is called God: they confound and overthrow the whole order and nature of things; they daringly invade the awful regalia of heaven, and react the part of that foul spirit, who, by such an impotent attempt, became, of a holy angel, a ghastly apostate devil.

I shall only farther observe, that our author has over-

looked what Tully * has said on this subject, viz. "That a due consideration of the heavenly bodies must lead every thinking man to the knowledge of God; that, from this knowledge, springs piety, with which is connected justice, and all the other virtues:" which is the same as if he had said, that the knowledge and love of God is the first spring of all virtuous actions.

I think Mr. Campbell cannot well make it out, that Socrates was animated to pursue a course of virtue, from the prospect of future and lasting felicity, unless his highest motive to action had been something he was very uncertain about; as is evident from his words to his friends, a little before his death: "I would have you know, said he, that I have great hopes that I am now going into the company of good men; yet I would not be too peremptory and confident concerning it."† "I am now about to leave this world, and ye are still to continue in it; which of us have the better part allotted us, God only knows."‡ He talks much of the writings of the heathen philosophers, but I am confident, that, when they are duly considered, it will be found that none of them go half-way with him, except what may be made of some expressions of the demure Stoics, and the stupid system of the Epicureans.

Upon the whole, it has been shown, that a pretence to make self-love, interest, and pleasure, the first spring and principle of moral virtue, is condemned by the Holy Scriptures, which set our obedience to God upon quite another foundation: that this notion of the first rise of moral virtue, is contrary to the plainest principles of reason; and that it has no manner of countenance from the writings of the more judicious and thinking part of the heathen philosophers, who have expressed quite other sentiments upon this important subject.

* De natura Deorum, lib. 2. † Plato in Phæd.
‡ Plato in Apol. Socrat.

SECTION II.

THAT SELF-INTEREST OR PLEASURE, IS NOT THE ONLY STANDARD BY WHICH WE ARE TO JUDGE OF THE VIRTUE OF OUR OWN AND OTHERS' ACTIONS; AND THAT ACTIONS ARE NOT TO BE CALLED VIRTUOUS ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR CORRESPONDENCY TO SELF-INTEREST.

HAVING considered what our author judges to be the first spring or principle of moral virtue, I shall now inquire into his sentiments concerning the rule or standard of virtuous actions. As to which, he expresseth himself as follows: "Since self-interest or pleasure is the only standard by which we can judge of the virtue, *i. e.* the value or goodness, of any action whatsoever, I do not see how a sense of virtue can be antecedent to ideas of advantage. For my part, I know no one action of any intelligent being, that can be called virtuous on any other account than from its correspondency to self-interest, or its fitness to promote the happiness of one's nature. Thus our actions towards the Deity are called virtuous, because they are suitable to his self-love;—as, on the other hand, the actions of the Deity towards us are called virtuous, because they are adapted to the interests of human nature."* "If we will consider all the several moral qualities that can be called virtuous, we shall find, that we like and approve those qualities, for no other reason, but for their being good to us; *i. e.* for the pleasure they give us, or for their gratifying our self-love."† "The goodness of any action done by one intelligent mind to another, from which it is denominated *moral virtue*, immediately lies in the conformity it has to

* Enquiry into the origin of moral virtue, p. 389.
† Ibid. pp. 357, 358.

our self-love, while it concurs and co-operates with this principle, in approving our being happy, and to secure and promote our well-being."* "But what ideas must we have of moral goodness? Does this likewise lie, as well as the other, in pleasure? or does it signify any thing else? I confess ingenuously, that I neither have, nor can form any other notion of it. And I conceive, that this sort of pleasure, or good, is called moral, because it springs from the *mores*, the manners, or the affections and actions of intelligent beings, or rational agents, and to distinguish it from that kind of pleasure or good, which we have from inanimate or irrational creatures; though it might be called natural, with as good reason as any other sort of pleasure or good whatsoever. One might subdivide natural goodness into a great many particular sorts, which differ fully as much from one another, as moral goodness can do from every one of them. If custom would allow of it, might not one talk of musical-goodness, picture-goodness, landscape-goodness, &c., thereby understanding the pleasures which we have from music, pictures, landscapes, and the like? And do not all these sorts of natural goodness differ from one another, as much as moral goodness possibly can do?"† Thus far Mr. Campbell.

Before I consider if our author's opinion here be founded upon the principles of sound reason, I shall first inquire into its agreeableness with the Holy Scriptures; and from them, I think, it will be abundantly evident, that self-interest or pleasure is not the only standard by which we are to judge of the virtue or goodness of actions; and that the goodness of an action, from which it is denominated *moral virtue*, does not immediately lie in the conformity it has to our self-love, although it concurs with this principle, or tends to secure and promote our happiness.

I. We are assured, from the word of God, that the goodness of an action does immediately lie in the con-

* Enquiry into the origin of moral virtue, pp. 319, 320.
† Ibid. pp. 354, 355.

formity it has to the law of God, and his will therein declared, and its being done from a respect to the authority of God the Lawgiver. To this purpose, God is said, by his word, and his law and will therein published, to have "showed unto us what is good," Mic. vi. 7, 8, 9. and "to delight in our obeying his voice; obedience to his will being better than sacrifice; and to hearken to him more acceptable than the fat of lambs," 1 Sam. xv. 22. And that the law of God, revealed in his word, is the adequate and only standard by which the goodness of actions is to be tried, appears, from his strictly requiring, that nothing be added to it, or taken from it, Deut. iv. 2. and xiii. 32. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. Nay it is certain, that as we are to do only what is commanded, so whatever we do, we are to do it because it is commanded, and from a respect to the will and authority of God manifested in his word; otherwise it is no part of our obedience to God, nor will be regarded by him as such. Hence it is said to be the character of the righteous man, that he endeavours "to keep God's statutes; because he hath commanded him to keep his precepts diligently," Psal. cxix. 4, 5. The great God hath enjoined us to order our conversation according to his word, Psal. cxix. 9: he hath remitted us to the "law and testimony," as the only standard of our conduct or actions; and he hath required us to take heed thereto, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts," Is. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. It is affirmed of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left us an example that we should follow his steps, that "he pleased not himself," or consulted not his own ease, Rom. xv. 3. but willingly exposed himself to all his sufferings, in obedience to his Father's will; and the whole of his obedience, as Mediator, is described in the glory and perfection of it, from its being performed in obedience to the command of God: for, saith he, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God," Psal. xl. 7, 8. The judicious Dr. Owen * has well observed, from the parallel

* Comment. on Heb. x. 7.

text, "That the fundamental motive unto the Lord Christ, in his undertaking the work of mediation, was the will and glory of God." We are obliged to honour the law of God, not principally because of its usefulness to us, or its suitableness to the order of the world, but for its innate purity, as bearing on it an impression of the holiness of God; and he values no service unless this property be found in it. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified," Lev. x. 3. Such is the principle of God's moral government; and seeing he formed the rational creature, to manifest his holiness in that law, whereby he was to be governed, we ought not to deprive him of that design of his own glory. The law of God is called *holy* and *pure*, Psal. xix. 8. Rom. vii. 12. as it emanates from the pure nature of the Lawgiver: and our lives are not expressive of his holiness, when we do a thing in the matter of it agreeable to the rule, if we do it not with a respect to the purity of the Lawgiver beaming in it. For, if we do any thing chiefly to serve a purpose of our own, we make not the holiness and authority of God, discovered in the law, our rule, but our own conveniency or happiness, which, in that case, we put in the place of God, and make a god to ourselves. It is very manifest, that if a man makes himself, and his own interest and pleasure, the rule and end of his actions, he prefers the creature to God, and loves it supremely, contrary to the will of God. Thus he invades God's right, refuseth to take God for his God, sets up himself as his own governor, and affects virtually an equality with God, and independency on him; which is that daring crime of the devil, which made him a sinner from the beginning. I might multiply Scripture texts to illustrate this subject; but having elsewhere made it appear, that the law of nature is insufficient to direct mankind to happiness, and that the Scriptures alone, in which the law of God is revealed, are the infallible standard of our duty, I shall not at present enlarge upon this part of the argument.

But, further, Mr. Campbell says, "That the goodness of any action, from which it is denominated *moral virtue*, lies in the conformity it has to our self-love; and that there is no difference betwixt natural goodness and moral goodness." But I hesitate not to affirm, that an action is not denominated virtuous, from its conformity to our self-love, but from the conformity it has to the law of God. We are assured by the apostle Paul, that the remains of the law of nature upon the minds of the Gentiles, who had not the written law, were the standard by which they judged of the virtue of their actions; that the will of God, revealed in his word, was the rule and measure, according to which they, who had the advantage of revealed religion, were to measure their actions; and that the actions of both were to be tried and judged, good or bad, at the judgment-seat of Christ, according to their conformity unto, or disagreement from the written word, or light of nature, Rom. ii. 12, 13, 14. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

The scope of the apostle in this passage is to show, that neither Jew nor Gentile can be justified by the works of the law. And, to illustrate the argument, he lays down what is requisite to justification, according to the tenor of the covenant of works; namely, to fulfil perfectly whatever is written in the law, or to persevere in a course of perfect obedience. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Though Mr. Campbell, then, should suppose himself as in-

nocent as Adam was in his primitive state, he cannot recommend himself to the favour of God, upon the footing of promoting his self-interest, but upon his entire conformity, in heart and life, to the law of God, and his subjection to the authority of God therein interposed. And however his conscience may acquiesce in his acting agreeably to his own interest, yet the heathens had, in this particular, more noble sentiments; for their consciences accused or excused them, according as their actions were agreeable or not "to the law of God written in their hearts." By this law written in their hearts we must understand the first principles of right reason, in a due exercise of which, a thinking man must deduce some of the first rules of veneration for the Deity, and of equity to man. This law contained some faint draught of the written law, and in so far instructed them what to do and avoid, which is the great property of a law; and because it did so, they are said "to do, by nature, the things contained in the law," and to be "a law unto themselves:" that is, they had some remains of that law in their hearts, which was inscribed, in full characters, upon the mind of man, at his creation, and were directed by it, in many instances, as to matters of moral right and wrong.

As the terms in which sin is described in scripture, such as חמאה, פשע, עון, ἀνομία, παραχοὴ, rebellion and disobedience, Is. i. 2. Rom. v. 19. discover the nature of it to consist in its disagreement to the law of God, therein declared; so the apostle John expressly asserts, that sin is "the transgression of the law," 1 John iii. 4. From which it is very manifest, that the law of God is the great and only standard of virtue, and that the virtue of our actions does immediately lie, not in their conformity to our self-love, but in their conformity to the law and will of God.

II. But, in proceeding to the second part of our inquiry, namely, whether this opinion be founded upon the principles of reason? we may observe, that to make self-interest or pleasure the only standard of virtue, and to pretend

that no action can be called virtuous, on any other account than its correspondency to self-interest, is plainly to destroy all virtue, and to make our own self-love the only ground and reason of our owing any love to God, or to our fellow-creatures. Can it be agreeable to the nature of things to say, that reasonable creatures owe no esteem, love, and subjection to God, for what he is in himself, but only for what he does, to gratify their self-love? Nothing but Deity can be the formal cause and foundation of divine worship, which is an ascribing infinite perfection to the object of worship, or giving expression to that love, trust, and esteem, which is proper and peculiar to God: and therefore our love to God, and our universal subjection unto him, must, in the nature of the thing, be founded upon what he is in himself, and not chiefly upon what he hath done for us; which is the fruit of his mere good pleasure. None of our actions can be called virtuous, but so far as they are done in obedience to him, and are agreeable to his will: for, as it is highly reasonable, that an infinitely perfect Being should prescribe a rule of action to his creatures; so they do not act agreeably to the rational faculties with which they are endowed, if their love to him is not supreme: that is, if, in all instances, they do not express the sense they have of their dependence upon him, and his authority over them as their great and only moral governor.

Our author has the assurance to say, that the actions of the Deity towards us are called virtuous, because they are adapted to the interest of human nature. But I thought that they had been holy, great, and good, because agreeable to his own nature and will. All who acknowledge the being and perfections of God, must own that he is not regulated by any law, without or beside himself. He is his own law and rule; and all his actions whatsoever are necessarily right, because agreeable to his own nature, will, and perfections; and it cannot be imagined, that he is astricted to, and governed by, a rule inferior to himself. Can Mr. Campbell deny that God is of "purer eyes than

to behold evil," or that "he hateth all the workers of iniquity?" Can he refuse it, that this is an holy, or, as he irreverently styles it, a virtuous action? Can he make it appear that it is holy or virtuous, because it is adapted to the interest of a sinful creature, and tends to promote its happiness? It must be acknowledged to be highly dishonourable to the great God, when men pay no regard either to reason or revelation, in talking of his ways, but imagine him to be such an one as themselves, and make a visionary hypothesis of their own, the measure and rule of their sentiments about him!

The more we consider this scheme, the more clearly does it appear, that, according to it, the creature's self-interest is made the sole, the paramount law, the measure of right and wrong, and God is confined to act by it, as much as those he has created; which is just the same as to say, that man is not accountable to his Creator, and that God has no authority to prescribe such laws to his creatures, as shall oblige them, dutifully, to acknowledge his sovereignty over them, or their entire dependence upon him. For, according to this scheme, he can prescribe nothing unto them but what their self-interest must direct them unto, although they were in no way dependent on him, and although he had no authority over them. So that every man is to be his own judge, as to whether he has, or has not, answered the end of his creation, by promoting his own happiness. If he has failed of this, he bears the loss of his own bad management; but is not otherwise accountable to the Most High for breaking his laws. Now what doth all this amount to, but just to supposing the living God to be an indolent Being, as Epicurus has represented him, not minding what they, who are the product of his hands, may do, in contempt of his authority!

There can be no doubt, that the duties prescribed to us by God, when rightly performed, do tend to promote our happiness. But to make that happiness the standard of duty, and to say that the actions of the Deity towards us are virtuous, because they are adapted to our interest, is

to reproach the Author of our being. For, is he not blasphemed, when that which is peculiar to him is ascribed to creatures? And is not this done, when it is maintained, that creatures are to act for themselves as their last end; or that their own interest and pleasure is the measure and rule of their actions, and not the will and law of God? Is not this to make creatures, or the interest and pleasure of creatures, as absolutely the rule of their actions, as if there was not a God to rule over them, as if they had received nothing from him, and were no way accountable to him, except in so far as they had done well for themselves in promoting their own happiness? Mr. Campbell could not bear it well, we see, from his preface to this edition of his Inquiry, that Dr. Innes should have the praise of this fine performance, as he took it to be! and how shall the Author of our being take it, if poor creatures like him arrogate to themselves the praise of what they have received from him, sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their own drag? Can they expect any thing less than that, as God, by the prophet, has threatened, they shall lie down in sorrow?

Our author tells us, that God, and all other intelligent beings, are universally governed by one common principle of self-love. But can it be agreeable to reason itself, or to the nature of things, to maintain, that creatures like us have as good reason to love themselves for their own intrinsic goodness as God has to love himself on that account; or that they have as good a right to act universally, and only from love to themselves, as God has to act only from love to himself? Nay, seeing, as has been shown, and shall in the sequel be further illustrated, that it is the peculiar and incommunicable glory of the great God, resulting from the infinite perfection of his nature, to act from supreme love to himself, and for himself, as his ultimate end; must not an attempt to set this important matter in a false light, and to invest poor creatures with the prerogative of heaven, be most injurious unto the honour of God, and the ready way to betray unthinking men

into mistakes, most destructive and pernicious to themselves?

Mr. Puffendorff, who may be allowed to have been as good a judge of the common reason of mankind as the high pretenders to reason in our times, says, "We call that a good action which is conformable to the law, as an ill one is that which is not conformable to it."* He adds elsewhere, as follows:—"Since, to the goodness of an action, it is not enough to do what the law enjoins, but to do it also with such an intention as is agreeable to that law; an action cannot be deemed perfectly good, unless it exactly, and in all its parts, answer the prescription; and unless the only motive that influenced the agent, was his desire of paying the legislator a prompt and ready obedience."† He likewise tells us, "That God, by his right of creation, has the power of prescribing bounds to that liberty of will he has been pleased to indulge mankind;"‡ and that, "seeing moral goodness and turpitude are affections of human deeds, arising from their agreeableness or disagreeableness to a rule or a law; and since a law is the command of a superior, it does not appear how we can conceive any goodness and turpitude before all law, and without the institution of some superior: and truly, as for those who would establish an eternal rule, for the morality of human actions, independent of a divine institution, the result of their endeavours seems to us to be the joining with God Almighty, some co-eval extrinsic principle, which he was obliged to follow in assigning the forms and essences of things."§ Thus far this author.

But, to proceed: It has been shown elsewhere,‖ that it is the first principle of the law of nature, that there is a God, who governs all things. And it may, from the same, and like arguments, be demonstrated to be the leading principle of natural religion, that as the dictates of sound reason are so many laws, made known to us by God;

* Puffendorff's Law of Nature, &c., by Spavan, chap. 7. p. 8.
† Ibid. pp. 92, 93. ‡ Ibid. p. 3. § Ibid. p. 20. ‖ Review, &c.

so it is his will, that we walk according to these dictates; and that if we walk contrary to them we violate his law, and contemn his authority. From which it follows, that the goodness of our actions lies in their conformity to the law and will of God, and not in their conformity to our self-love, pleasure, and advantage.

Indeed it is most certain, that however men may pay a regard to some of the laws of nature, from a prospect of their interest in so doing, as we follow a physician's prescription for our health, who has no authority over us; yet they cannot observe them as laws, because every law necessarily implies a superior; or one that has, or has usurped, the right to govern and direct his inferiors.

Our author, who magnifies the law of nature, and bestows such great encomiums upon it, must be of opinion, either that this same law of nature doth subject mankind to the authority of God, or that it doth not. If it doth not, then, according to him, God has no authority over the works of his hands; and they are no more accountable to God, than if they were independent of him, and had received neither existence nor preservation from him; which is an opinion so black, that I forbear to give it a name. But if he acknowledge that mankind, by the law of nature, are subjected to the authority of God, then it must be owned, that it is God's authority only that makes the law of nature to be a law, and that its binding force is not from the fitness of what is prescribed by it, to promote pleasure or self-interest, but from the authority of God stamped upon it. Hence the nature of moral virtue must lie, not in the fitness of the action to promote happiness, but in its agreeableness to the will of God, declared in his law.

Our author's scheme seems likewise to expose him to the necessity of allowing some degree of moral virtue to brutes. And, although there is no reason to doubt but that brutes, as they are capable of being treated by us either mercifully or cruelly, may be to us the *objects* either of virtue or vice; yet, to maintain that they may be the

subjects of virtue, must be wild and extravagant. But if the tendency of an action, to promote the happiness of the agent, be the true notion of virtue, it were unreasonable to refuse that brutes are virtuous; seeing they manifestly pursue their own pleasure or their own happiness, in a great variety of actions, and do follow the instincts and impulses of nature more steadily and regularly than men. Nay, if a consciousness of the moral goodness of actions, in their conformity to the divine law, be not required to constitute these actions virtuous, what is there wanting to the virtue of many a brute?

What a moral agent primarily proposes, is to act reasonably, or according to the law of God, made known to him, either by the word of God as among us Christians, or by the principles of natural religion, as among such as are not enlightened from above. But to act merely from an impulse to what is pleasing, or a natural good, has always been reckoned a leading principle only among agents which are destitute of reason and reflection; and therefore incapable to be moved from any other spring of action. So that, to make pleasure of any kind the chief end of a moral agent, must be as absurd as to make truth or virtue the property of a being who is merely sentient.

Our author, to complete his scheme, has thought fit to reject the distinction betwixt *bonum honestum*, and *bonum utile et jucundum*, which has been maintained by some of the most judicious of the heathen philosophers: and he tells us frankly, that musical-goodness and landscape-goodness differ from one another, as much as moral goodness possibly can do from either. Thus the morality of our actions, according to him, has no relation to the law, will, or authority of God; but our interest or pleasure is the rule and measure of all things; there is no difference, in his eyes, betwixt devotion-goodness and landscape-goodness; our love to God, and our love to a fine house or garden: and there is no difference betwixt the devotions and services of the angelical tribe, and the goodness of Mr. Campbell's action, in looking at, or riding on a fine horse,

but just as Mr. Campbell's pleasure is greater or less in degree than theirs!

I suppose that no thinking man will judge it worth while to enlarge in refuting such extravagant tenets. I shall only tell our author, that, by resolving all obligations into pleasure, and natural good, he has denied that virtue is good in itself, and affirmed it to be no otherwise good, than as it does us good. Whereas, it is certainly self-amiable and self-worthy, and deserves our approbation and choice. On the same ground, he has likewise denied, that there can be any such thing as an intrinsic preferableness of one action to another, more than of one colour to another. Every agent well knows what actions please him, and what displease him; but in themselves, according to this scheme, they are all equally valuable, or rather equally worthless.

But however our author may amuse himself with these speculations, it is a thing most certain, that the communication of natural good is by no means an essential ingredient of moral rectitude. If no natural good, if the happiness of no being whatever, could possibly be promoted by piety, for instance, it would still be the duty of every intelligent creature to reverence and worship the Deity: for the supremacy and infinite perfection of such an object makes this, in the highest degree, reasonable, even supposing no advantage did or could redound from it to any one whatever.

Is it to be imagined, that Mr. Campbell would take it as a compliment from his friend, if that friend told him that he esteemed him, and testified his esteem for him on all occasions, for no better reason, than a suspicion or fear, that, if he carried it otherwise towards him, this might, some time or other, turn to his own disadvantage. For my part, I think his friend, by such an address, would very naturally be led to tell him, that he neither esteemed nor regarded him at all. Let him therefore seriously consider whether he has behaved himself suitably to the Author of his being, when he has published to the world, that his

leading motive for reverencing HIM, is merely his own profit, pleasure, and advantage; and that the reason why he abstains from blaspheming or reproaching him, is chiefly the fear of bringing injury on himself.

Upon the whole, I think it is very manifest, from what has been advanced, that our actions are called virtuous, on account of their correspondency to the law and will of God, or to the relation creatures stand in to the Author of their being; and not on account of their tendency to gratify our self-love.

SECTION III.

THAT SELF-LOVE, AS IT EXERTS ITSELF IN THE DESIRE OF UNIVERSAL UNLIMITED ESTEEM, OUGHT NOT TO BE MADE THE COMMANDING MOTIVE TO VIRTUOUS ACTIONS; NOR IS THE OBTAINING THE GOOD-LIKING AND ESTEEM OF THOSE BEINGS, AMONG WHOM WE ARE MIXED, TO BE OUR MAIN END IN PURSUING THEM.

HAVING made some reflections upon Mr. Campbell's sentiments, concerning the spring or principle, and the rule or standard of virtuous actions; I shall now consider his opinion, as to our great motive and main end, in pursuing a course of virtue. On this point, he expresseth himself as follows: "I likewise hold, that self-love, as it exerts itself in the desire of universal unlimited esteem, is the great commanding motive that determines us to the pursuit of such virtuous actions.* Every man being thus naturally joined in society to all his own species, and to God himself, as the great Author of his being, our supreme Head and kind Benefactor; if his social appetite be not miserably perverted, he cannot but necessarily seek for, and desire the esteem and good liking of all mankind; and particularly of God, under whose government we all live.† If we settle it, as our main purpose, to recommend ourselves to the love, esteem, and commendation of God, and of all mankind, through every stage of our eternal existence, (which, if we follow nature, we cannot but do, as I have already explained in my Enquiry,) every degree of esteem we acquire here cannot but be exceedingly grateful; and the means that lift us up to this commendation (which I have likewise shown, in the foregoing Enquiry, to be the

* Enquiry, &c. pp. 257, 258. † Ibid. p. 72.

moral virtues) cannot but prove extremely agreeable.* Upon the whole, I will conclude, that the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest, or pleasure."† Thus far our author.

In order to fix the true state of the question, let it be borne in mind that it is by no means denied that we may have a respect to our own happiness: for God having made man capable of enjoying himself, and having condescended, at his creation, to encourage his obedience, by a promise of future and lasting felicity, which is renewed, through Christ, in the gospel; it can be no part of the Christian scheme, that men are to be denied to their own happiness, or made willing to forego it. But the question is, whether, in obeying the law of God, we should be chiefly actuated by a sense of the infinite perfection and authority of the Lawgiver, and of our subjection to him. Or whether we ought rather, though poor dependent creatures, principally to act from love to ourselves, aiming at our own advantage, pleasure, and honour, as the commanding motive to virtuous actions, and our main end in pursuing them? The first seems to me to be founded in the nature and relation of things; and the latter to be subversive of both.

Here I have the pleasure to observe, that I don't differ in opinion from a reverend and learned body of men, who, upon a certain occasion, delivered their sentiments on this head, in the following terms:‡ That "men are bound to make the glory of God their chief end, though yet they are called herewith to pursue happiness." And "that by the instinct of that new nature, the Lord endoweth all his people with in regeneration, they are enabled, by the influence of grace, in some measure, and daily desire, more and more, to serve God for himself, and his supereminent excellencies, and not merely or chiefly for the prospect of their own happiness." And "that it is agreeable, both to their character and duty, to have a prevailing respect to

* Enquiry, &c. p. 273. † Ibid. p. 463.
‡ See State of the Process against Mr. Simson, p. 277.

God's glory, as their ultimate end, and the chief motive of their obedience." Thus far the reverend committee of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

In treating this subject very briefly, I shall first make it appear, from the scriptures of truth, that the glory of God, and not our own fame and esteem, ought to be our main end in pursuing virtuous actions. Secondly, I shall inquire, if it be agreeable to the principles of reason, to make the desire of universal unlimited esteem the great commanding motive unto them.

I. As to the first, that the glory of God, and not our own fame and esteem, ought to be our main end, in pursuing a course of virtue and obedience to God, appears, if we consider, that our duty of worship and obedience is primarily founded upon the infinite excellencies of God, or upon what he is in himself. Thus, when God is about to deliver a law to Israel, at Horeb, he introduceth the whole with this solemn preface, "I am the Lord JEHOVAH," *i. e.* the only true God, the self-existent, eternal, infinitely perfect and necessary Being. It is true, it is added, "Thy God," that is, by creation, and a special covenant relation; and this is acknowledged to be a secondary and powerful motive to duty and obedience. But he fitly placeth himself, in his nature, and infinite perfections, in the front, as the primary foundation of all his commands, and of his people's duty in obeying them: because we must first, in order, view him, as infinitely perfect in himself, and an all-sufficient Being, else he had never given creatures a being, or well-being; and because their duty of obedience is founded in their relation to him, and dependence upon him: whereas their happiness, in a state of future and lasting felicity, proceeds, as I have shown above, from his free-will and bounty.

To this purpose, the prophet Jeremiah assigns it, as the great reason why we are to fear and worship God; because "there is none like unto him, and because he is great, and his name great in might." Elsewhere we are taught to glorify his name, because he only is holy,

Jer. x. 6, 7. Rev. xv. 4. And the apostle Paul condemns those who did service to them which by nature were no gods, Gal. iv. 8: intimating, that God's title to our worship is primarily founded in his Godhead or in the infinite and supereminent excellency of his nature. In a suitableness to this, when the Lycaonians took Paul and Barnabas for gods, they answered them, by telling them, not that they "could not do much good unto them," which, in a ministerial way, they were abundantly qualified for, but that they were weak, imperfect, dependent creatures, who had not a divine nature, and so were not fit objects of religious adoration. From which it is very manifest, that God's title to our worship and service is primarily founded upon what he is in himself, and not upon his bounty to us as his creatures; and his legislative authority over all dependent, intelligent beings, stands upon the same foundation. For though he has a right to prescribe laws to those to whom he gave a being; yet it was, in the first place, owing to his being infinitely perfect, and infinitely good in himself, that he gave a being to those who had none before.

It is not merely because of what he hath done in a way of bounty, but primarily, because he is in himself infinitely perfect, that he is worthy of the highest adoration, and of the most absolute subjection, that finite creatures are capable of rendering to the Author of their being. From all which, it is very manifest, that we are obliged, principally, to love, fear, worship, and obey God, for "what he is in himself," and not chiefly from a prospect of our own happiness, pleasure, and interest.

The apostle Paul confirms this doctrine, from that plain topic, that God is the first Cause, and therefore he is the unlimited End of all things. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things," Rom. xi. 36. "The nature of God consists in this," says a learned author,* "that he is the prime and original Cause of all things, as an inde-

* Pearson on the Creed, p. 23.

pendent Being, upon which all things also depend; and likewise he is the ultimate End or final Cause of all." Again Solomon tells us, "That God made all things for himself:" and it is plain he could have no other end than himself, and his own glory, in so doing; for there was nothing good or great, and truly lovely, but himself; and all rational creatures, acting as such, cannot but make him, and his glory, their ultimate end. For, seeing it is the brightest ray of the divine image, that a created understanding should see and judge of things in God's light, and entertain the same sentiments of them with him, whose infinite knowledge makes it impossible he can fall into any mistake; it must therefore be the highest excellency of the soul of man, to move to the same end with the Author of his being.

It is very manifest, that self-love, in a supreme sense, can only be the distinguishing character and peculiar glory of the ever-blessed God. He can love nothing above himself, and his own glory, because there is nothing supremely good or great, or lovely, but himself. It therefore flows from his own infinite perfection, that he loves himself in a supreme manner; and it is his peculiar glory to do so. Upon the other hand, for a finite creature to be actuated chiefly by a principle of self-love, argues the greatest imperfection and depravity of nature. For, it is either to say, that there is nothing greater or better than itself, and what relates to itself, than which nothing can be more blasphemous; or, that a rational creature, acting as such, may prefer a lesser good to a greater; than which nothing can be more absurd.

If it be pretended, that the creature's happiness is the greatest good to itself, and that no rational creature can love any thing but as good to itself; it is replied, that while man's happiness is placed where it ought to be, in the enjoyment of God, an infinite good, yet it may be considered, either as that by which a finite creature is made happy, which is a finite, relative, precarious good, because mutable in its nature, and finite in its subject; as is plain

in the case of the fallen angels: or, it may be considered as that by which an infinite God is glorified, which is an absolute infinite good. Now, if a man's happiness, though in the enjoyment of God, be chiefly sought, that the man himself may be happy therein, then it is himself that he ultimately and chiefly seeks and not God: and if he ultimately seek himself, though the noblest means, such as the enjoyment of God, be made use of; yet they are only means to the end, and loved chiefly for the sake of the end; and thus man is made his own ultimate end: and if he be his own ultimate end, then he is his own god; for a man cannot esteem, love, or desire any thing beyond his ultimate end: and what a man esteems, loves, and desires most, is his god. But if a man chiefly desire his own happiness in the enjoyment of God, that God may be glorified in him, and by him, he thereby acknowledges God and his glory to be his ultimate end; which is the very thing we contend for.

Whatever excels is worthy of esteem, suited to the degree of its excellency. Now, God's excellency being infinitely superior to that of all creatures, they must sink infinitely below him; and if they act according to reason, they must acknowledge his infinite perfection, their dependence upon him, and their absolute subjection unto him. It cannot be refused to be essential to the moral perfection of a reasonable creature, to esteem and love that Being above all things, who is above all things, in glory, excellency, and every perfection; and therefore every man, acting according to the original frame of human nature, must have the highest respect to the honour and glory of God, as his chief and ultimate end. It is by no means asserted, that we are obliged to a willingness to forego our own happiness; which is no constitutive part of a subordinate end: seeing all that is required, is to love the ultimate end most, and the subordinate less. I hope those who make God's glory subordinate to man's happiness, do not therefore say that they are obliged, in some cases, willingly to give up with the glory of God, for their own private interest. But to proceed,—

Let us further consider, that man stands in a subordination to God in his being; and therefore in a subordination to him as his last end. Hence the apostle directs us, that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. The rule is general, not to be restrained to the eating of meat offered to idols, of which the former discourse had been; but extends itself to whatever we do, that is, to all human actions whatsoever. Elsewhere he tells us, "That we are not our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore are obliged to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his:" and it is highly agreeable to reason, that we, deriving our being from another by creation, and passing into the right of another by redemption, should employ our derived and borrowed all, for his honour and glory.

It was the end of our election and effectual calling, that we should show forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9.; and it was one great design of the death of Christ, to restore man to his primitive allegiance; for he died for us, that we should not live to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 15. This is plainly the exercise of the spirits of just men made perfect, in the regions of light and bliss above; who are represented, in scripture, as employing all their faculties in adoring him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever. God here is ALL IN ALL, the Centre and End of all; he is infinitely lifted up above all: and his servants do serve him, beholding his face, and eternally losing themselves in love, wonder, and praise!

It may be further observed, that if our own happiness and self-interest be allowed to be the chief motive of our glorifying God upon earth, then the chief motive of our hatred against sin, and of our returning to God with a penitential sorrow for it, cannot be the offence and dishonour done thereby to God, but the ruin which it brings upon us; and the chief motive to the love of God, by which we most eminently glorify him, must be our own happi-

ness, or love to ourselves. But to assert these things, is, at once, to contradict the whole scripture, and to overthrow the plainest principles of natural religion.

Again, if self-love is acknowledged to be the leading principle of action among dependent beings, then it will follow, that there is such an unintelligible thing as a creature made *by* God, and yet not *for* God and his glory, but for itself, and for its own private interest, as its highest end; and that the creature is, in itself, its own ultimate happiness, as well as its own ultimate end; seeing no created being, in a course of action, can arrive at a greater happiness than the perfection of its own nature.

I have elsewhere* observed, that a respect to the glory of God was the highest and noblest principle that moved our Lord Jesus Christ to undertake and undergo his sufferings; and that a chief and primary regard to the honour of God, as the ultimate end of his whole mediation, did most conspicuously appear in the whole course of his obedience, wherein he has left us a pattern, to be followed by us, with veneration, in the whole of our Christian course. Therefore I shall not at present enlarge further upon this branch of the argument; but proceed to observe, that as the apostle has given it as the black character of the worst of men, that should be a plague to human society, and the reproach of human nature, in the latter days, that they are "lovers of their ownselves," and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 4.; so our Lord and Saviour has made self-denial the distinguishing and necessary character of all his disciples and followers: for, saith he, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Christ's disciples must come after him; that is, they must walk in the same way that he walked in, and propose to themselves the same high and ultimate end which he aimed at, the glory of God. They must "deny themselves," and herein "come after Christ;" whose birth, life, and death, were all a con-

* Sermon on Jude, verse 3.

tinued act of self-denial, Phil. ii. 7, 8. They must deny themselves absolutely: they must not admire their own excellencies, nor gratify their own humours, nor seek their own things; and they must not lean to their own understanding, nor be their own end.

It is an excellent saying that Bernard hath upon the nativity of Christ,* "What more detestable, what more unworthy, or what deserves severer punishment," saith he, "than for a poor man to magnify himself; after he hath seen the great and high God so humble as to become a little child?" "And," adds he, "it is intolerable impudence for a worm to swell with pride, after it hath seen Majesty emptying itself."

Let us but consider how opposite a thing pride is to the spirit of a Christian. Nothing certainly can be more so to the Spirit of Christ. Our Saviour was lowly, meek, and self-denying. He has assured us, "That he did not seek his own will, but the will of him that sent him;" the apostle tells us, "That he pleased not himself;" and seeing he was of a most humble and condescending spirit, seeking not his own things, but ours, Phil. ii. 4, 5. doth it become us to be proud, vain, and selfish?

It likewise deserves our consideration, upon this part of the argument, that, by our Lord's account, the love of God is the first and great commandment, the summary of all the commands of the first table of the moral law; thus telling us that we must love God with all our hearts, strength, soul, and mind; importing, that our love to him must be supreme and singular, as well as sincere; that, in short, we must love him more than any thing else. Now our Lord's saying that this is the first and great commandment, can bear no other meaning, but that obedience to it is the spring of obedience to all the rest; and that our obedience to him is only acceptable when it flows from love to God himself. And though we are allowed to love ourselves, and to pursue happiness at the impulse of that

* Bernard Serm. 1st de Nativit.

love, yet how can it be otherwise in the nature of things, but that we must love God better than ourselves, or any thing else; seeing he is JEHOVAH, a Being infinitely better than we are, or any thing beside himself? We ought therefore to love God supremely; and to love him chiefly for himself, and not mainly with a view to our own happiness. For to love God chiefly as good to us, is to love him chiefly for ourselves, and so to love ourselves more than God; than which nothing can be more impious or contradictory to the principles of religion, whether natural or revealed.

A celebrated author* says, "That we must first conceive the object lovely and excellent in itself, before we can wish it loving and kind to us. And let us consider," adds he, "how much those that are conscious to their having virtue enough in themselves to make them prize it in others, are in love with Cato, Scipio, and those other heroes, upon the bare knowledge of their virtues, although from them they derive no present advantage." "Since then," he goes on to say, "we pay such disinterested love to some few, faint, and ill-refined virtues, that never did profit us; how much, on such a score, and at that rate, should we love him, who so possesses all perfection, that each of his perfections is infinite? Though his benefits to us did not entitle him to our love, his essence and perfections, the only source of those benefits, would give a right to it; and though we owed him nothing for what we are, we yet should owe him love for what he is."

It may be easily demonstrated, that self-love, as it is to be found among lapsed men, is most irregular and inordinate. And can it be thought, that that inordinate passion for felicity, which at once seduced both angels and men from their true happiness, by pride and folly, can justly be esteemed the leading principle and chief motive of all moral actions? Was not Adam obliged to love and obey his Creator, even although he had made no promise to him of

* Mr. Boyle in his discourse of Seraphic Love.

future and eternal happiness, as the reward of his obedience? And, shall we imagine, that this is the genuine fruit of God's gracious condescension, in promising and conferring happiness on the creature, to make his love and obedience become merely selfish and mercenary?

Love is the great thing that God demands of us; it is therefore the great thing we should devote to him; and seeing good is the proper object of love, God being good infinitely, originally, and eternally, must therefore be loved in the first place; nothing being loved beside him, but what is loved for him: and it follows from this, that our obedience must be animated with love to God, or a due respect to his honour and glory, as its great governing principle.

It is certain, indeed, that if we love God above all things, as it has been shown we ought to do, we cannot possibly fail to celebrate his infinite excellencies, or to give him that glory which is due to his name; and nothing will be farther from our thoughts, than to make our own fame or renown to rival it with him.

Upon the whole, I think it is very manifest, from the holy scriptures, that the glory of God, and not our own fame and esteem, ought to be our ruling motive in pursuing virtuous actions.

II. I shall now proceed to inquire what reason has to say upon this point; and I think an ingenious writer has set it in a true light when he expresseth himself in the following terms:*—"It is usual for us, when we would take off from the fame and reputation of an action, to ascribe it to vain-glory, and a desire of fame in the actor. Nor is this common judgment and opinion of mankind ill founded; for certainly it denotes no great bravery of mind to be worked up to any noble action by so selfish a motive, and to do that out of a desire of fame, which we could not be prompted to by a disinterested love to mankind, or by a generous passion for the glory of him that made us.

* Spectator, vol. iv., numbers 255, 256.

"Fame is a thing difficult to be obtained by all, but particularly by those who thirst after it; since most men have so much either of ill-nature or of wariness, as not to gratify and soothe the vanity of the ambitious man: and since this very thirst after fame naturally betrays him into such indecencies as are a lessening to his reputation, and is itself looked upon as a weakness in the greatest characters.

"In the next place, fame is easily lost; and as difficult to be preserved as it was at first to be acquired.——How difficult is it to preserve a great name, when he that has acquired it is obnoxious to such little weaknesses and infirmities, as are no small diminution to it when discovered!——Were no dispositions in others to censure a famous man, he would meet with no small trouble in keeping up his reputation in all its height and splendour. There must be always a noble train of actions to preserve his fame in life and motion; for, when it is once at a stand, it naturally flags and languishes.

"Ambition raises a secret tumult in the soul; it inflames the mind, and puts it into a violent hurry of thought; it is still reaching after an empty imaginary good, that has not in it the power to abate or satisfy it.—It may, indeed, fill the mind for a while with a giddy kind of pleasure, but it is such a pleasure as makes a man restless and uneasy under it; and which does not so much satisfy the present thirst, as it excites fresh desires, and sets the soul on new enterprises.

"Nor is fame only unsatisfying in itself, but the desire of it lays open to many accidental troubles, which those are free from who have no such a tender regard to it. How often is the ambitious man cast down and disappointed, if he receives no praise where he expected it? Nay, how often is he mortified with the praises he receives, if they do not rise so high as he thinks they ought: which they seldom do, unless increased by flattery; since few men have so good an opinion of us as we have of ourselves?"

I hope the above reasoning will have its own force to persuade Mr. Campbell, that the esteem of his fellow-men, and of those beings among whom he is mixed, is a thing by no means so valuable as he at first apprehended; and that he will think of following a course of virtue for the future, from a view to a higher end, and from a more noble motive than self-love, interest, and pleasure.

Mr. Campbell tells us that "we are to settle it, as our main purpose, to recommend ourselves to the love, and esteem, and commendation of God; and that the moral virtues are the means that lift us up to this commendation." But it is very manifest that mankind are in a depraved state, and that they have offended God; which is proved, by the malignity of the wicked, by the sacrifices which obtained in the Pagan world, and by the complaints which heathen philosophers have made of the depravation and wickedness of the ages themselves had fallen into. And, can it be pretended to be a principle of sound reason, that the moral virtues, or the best actions of men in a sinful state, can gain them the esteem and good-liking of God, here or hereafter? Nature's light will teach us, and Plato, cited by the author,* referred to in the margin, has owned it, that a holy and good God did not create mankind depraved and disordered in their faculties as they now are. Their depravation and corruption is owing to themselves, and not to the Author of their being; and hence they must, in the nature of the thing, be justly obnoxious to the divine displeasure, upon this account, and for all the consequences of this depravation of their nature; particularly for this, among others, that they can perform no duty in such a manner as to please God.

It is very certain that no man, in a state of depravation, can do any thing, with that love to God, or respect to his authority, which the law doth require; and therefore his best actions cannot recommend him to the esteem of the Author of his being. For, if he is supposed to do anything,

* Gales's Court of the Gentiles, part. 4, lib. i., cap. 4.

every way as the law requires, he is not a depraved but a perfect creature; and if he can do any thing as it ought to be done, he may, by the same abilities, do every thing as it ought to be done. But, as the best thing he can do, coming short of the law and rule of action, is therefore sinful: as the best actions of all men being thus imperfect are sinful; as it is a vain imagination to pretend, that they can render men acceptable to God, or gain his esteem and good-liking; so we cannot enough adore God, for the revelation of Christ, and the hopes of being justified by his merit, and sanctified by his Spirit.

Can it ever be thought that there is any excellency in the most holy creatures, but what God himself has given to them, and preserves in them? But if it all comes from him, it is more his than theirs; and all the praise of it is due to him alone. And, as to us, who are lapsed creatures, what can he see in us but sin or moral uncleanness, the very object of his holy aversion? It were therefore the most absurd thing in the world, for any created being, whether fallen or unfallen, to make his own fame and esteem the highest end of his actions; seeing the pursuing of such a course would be itself a fall; as it is absolutely inconsistent with a state of innocence to be chiefly influenced by it.

As to what our author says, about every man necessarily desiring the esteem of all mankind, and passionately seeking after the good opinion of those among whom he is mixed; I must beg him to tell me, if he, or any other man, can reasonably desire any greater esteem, than his merit entitles him unto? And let him tell me, at the same time, what name that passion deserves, which can inspire a man with the remotest thought, that his good qualities deserve such respect from his fellow-men as makes that respect a higher motive to virtue, than a respect to the authority and glory of the great God, from whom he has received life, and breath, and all things.

I conclude this argument with observing, That for a man to make himself his own ultimate end, is to make

himself the object of his own supreme love, desire, and esteem; because nothing can be loved, desired, or esteemed, above the ultimate end of a rational agent: and every thing else, being only means to that end, must, in the nature of the thing, have only a secondary regard, and be loved for its sake. But for a creature to love and esteem itself above all other beings, is at once to throw away all regard to the Deity, and to renounce its dependence upon him. For, it being certain, that religious worship essentially includes in it, that the object be loved and esteemed above all things; it must follow, that self is the idol to be worshipped, according to this scheme of principles; and that God is to be dethroned, and neither worshipped nor acknowledged: or if acknowledged, only in so far as self can serve a turn by it; which, I think, cannot well be allowed to be any kind of worship at all, unless Mr. Campbell be delighted with the distinction of supreme and inferior worship, and have the confidence to present the latter to his Maker.

Thus, I think, it has been made very evident, from the sacred oracles, and from the principles of reason, that the glory of God, and not our own self-love, interest, and pleasure ought to be our main and ultimate end as moral agents; and that our own fame and esteem ought not to be the great commanding motive to virtuous actions.

CONCLUSION.

I MIGHT conclude, by making some general reflections upon Mr. Campbell's treatise, and his preface thereto prefixed. But, seeing this would lead me into much greater length than I intend, I shall not enter upon them at present.

Only, I think, it might have been reasonably expected, that our author would have advanced very strong arguments, to support such a scheme of principles as he has thought fit to send abroad into the world; but if we search his whole book, we can find none except the following, or

others of the like nature; namely, that *he* cannot but be governed by self-love, because he sees all the world besides only animated by this principle.

But what although Mr. Campbell should find in himself, and can appeal to the breasts of too many others, that a silly vanity has the ascendancy over him; and that a regard to the authority of God, and a respect to his glory, has not that prevailing influence which it ought to have upon the actions of men? Will this say, that such disorder and confusion in men's breasts, belongs to the original frame of human nature? No more, I am sure, than Mr. Campbell can prove, from a highway-man's being induced, from his self-interest, to plunder the innocent traveller, and afterwards cut his throat, that robbery and murder belong to the original frame of human nature.

Of all things in the world depravity is the most universal. Every thinking man feels it in himself, and observes it in others. But it were a weak way of reasoning to argue thus: Vice is universal; and all the world are, less or more, under its influence: *Ergo*, vice belongs to the original frame of human nature. I say, it were exceeding blunt to run away with the consequence, as sufficiently proved, by a bare proposal of the argument; or to sound an imaginary triumph, in a harangue of three or four hundred pages. However beautiful expressions, and laboured periods, may be entertaining to a polite taste; yet I cannot, for my part, have any great value for a book, however polished or prolix, whose reasoning proceeds upon no better a foundation than *petitio principii, et ignorantia elenchi.*

Neither can I think that mankind are exceedingly obliged to Mr. Campbell's courtesy for representing them as so many vain-glorious creatures; seeking fame, and thirsting for renown, as the main end of all their actions. For all that creatures have is derived from God's exuberant goodness; and therefore all the praise of it is due to him, and not to themselves. Nothing truly valuable can be found among lapsed creatures, but what is owing to grace

in its rise, progress, and consummation; which must for ever exclude all boasting on our part, and induce him that glorieth, to glory in the Lord.

I may appeal to the breast of every thinking man, if it is not reasonable that rational creatures, deriving their being from God, as the first Cause, should employ all their faculties and powers to promote his glory as their last end? and, if it is not manifest, that their agreeing in one last end necessarily unites them, as lines meeting in the centre; whereas making as many last ends as there are rational creatures, leads to universal disorder and confusion? I might farther ask with equal confidence, if their pursuing the same high and ultimate end with the Author of their being must not be worthy of their nature, a branch of their conformity and likeness to God, and the way to maintain union and intercourse with him? Whereas, to set up our own self-interest, pleasure, and esteem, as our highest end, is either to say, that a man may attempt to pass into an higher rank than that of created beings; or that he may act otherwise than a creature is, in reason, obliged to do, from a consideration of its dependence upon God, and of its own weak and limited perfections.

No doubt, we are to desire, and endeavour to maintain our good name; that we may be useful in the world, and that God may be honoured by us: but to make this our main end, and the highest and sole motive to action, and thus to set it above the reverence which dependent beings ought to have for the authority of the great God, is to throw up all regard to religion, whether natural or revealed. Such a vicious self-love ought by all means to be mortified. To this purpose, our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ has taught us to deny ourselves; and an apostle has given a check to this unreasonable passion, in these remarkable words: "Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?"

Ambition or vain-glory is most certainly a corrupt thing; disposing us to boast and commend ourselves, and

inordinately to seek after applause and esteem. The apostles of Christ did vindicate their ministry, from this as well as other vices, 1 Thess. ii. 6. and made ostentation the characteristic of false teachers, 2 Cor. x. 12. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ reproved it as the sin of the Scribes and Pharisees, that in their prayers, alms, fasting, affected habits, and titles, they sought the praise of men. And as the apostle Paul did not seek glory of men, so did he forbid it to others. "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another." It is clearly a sin directly opposite to humility, unbecoming in man, highly dishonourable to God, and contrary to the whole spirit of the gospel; and though some among the heathen took it for a virtue, as they did likewise some of the foulest of vices, yet we have not so learned Christ.

May "the same mind be in us, which also was in Christ Jesus;" who being one God with the Father, and the Son of the Father, by an eternal, necessary, and ineffable generation; yet having, by his own voluntary condescension, assumed our nature, "sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him," John viii. 50. and vii. 18. Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. And may the love of Christ constrain us to a course of holy walking with God, because "we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

CHRIST'S CALL TO THE RISING GENERATION,

CONSIDERED AND APPLIED IN

THREE SERMONS.

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

HAVING been directed, in the course of my ministry, to preach the gospel of Christ to you, from the texts prefixed to the following sermons, I have taken this method, to lay the truths then delivered before you, and others who may read these discourses, that you may deliberately consider the things which belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes. In transcribing my notes, I have not closely adhered to the periods of the sermons, as they were delivered in your hearing; but have put the substance of the discourses in such a form as I thought most proper for edification to the private reader; while, in transcribing, I have enlarged upon several heads, and added others.

In these discourses, I have not entered upon the controversies of the times, nor dwelt upon your duty to bear testimony to the truths of Christ, to his kingly office, and all the other branches of his covenanted cause and interest in this land; which is a subject most useful and necessary to be handled in its own proper place: but considering that it is needful you have some saving acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith of the operation of God, in order to your being faithful witnesses for Christ, and holding fast the word of his patience, I have therefore endeavoured, through the Lord's assistance, to lay the following plain and important truths before you, from the word of God: and may the Holy Spirit breathe upon them, by his own divine influence, that, through his grace, you may be brought to believe on the Son of God! And if you believe in him with

the heart, you have ground to expect that you shall be enabled, by grace, according to your circumstances, to confess him with your mouth.

I hope you will strive together in your prayers to God, that the truths here delivered, may be blessed to the glory of his name, and the spiritual benefit of such as shall read and ponder them in their hearts; and that the promises made to our highest Lord IMMANUEL, and to us in him, may be now remarkably accomplished in the latter days, that "the isles shall wait for his law;" that "in his name the Gentiles shall trust;" and that "his name shall endure for ever;" and "upon his head the crown shall flourish!"

SERMON I.

MARK x. 14.—"But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

WE have here the welcome which Christ gave to some little children that were brought unto him. In the preceding verse, it is said, "They brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them." We may suppose they were their parents that brought them: others brought their children to Christ, to be healed when they were sick; but these children were under no present malady, only they who brought them to Christ desired a blessing for them. They brought them to him, that he might touch them; it is elsewhere said, that he might lay his hands upon them; that is, that he might bestow a blessing upon them. Thus Jacob put his hands upon the sons of Joseph, when he blessed them. The disciples discouraged those that brought them; they thought it would bring a great trouble to their Master, and therefore rebuked them.

But our Lord Jesus was much displeased with the conduct of the disciples, and encouraged the little children to come unto him, and their parents in bringing them. They who come to Christ themselves, should bring all they have with them, and confidently expect a kindly welcome. They who are blessed in Christ themselves, should desire to have their children blessed in him; and should testify the love they have for their children, by a concern about their souls, as well as the honour they

desire to put upon the Lord Jesus, by devoting them to his service. Yea we may present our children to Christ, now in heaven, that he may touch their hearts by his Spirit and grace. In this way we may act faith upon the fulness and freedom of the grace of Christ, who has promised to pour his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring.

The words contain a gracious call or invitation, directed by Christ to the rising generation, and a direction to all with reference thereto; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Here we may notice, 1. The glorious Person speaking, and inviting perishing souls to himself; "Jesus said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me." Jesus said it, and you may trust his word, little children; Jesus, the Saviour of the world; Jesus, who saves his people from their sins, has said it, that little children, such as you, are included in his commission, to seek and to save that which was lost. 2. We may observe the persons to whom this gospel call is directed; it is to you who are little children; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Let nothing be done to hinder them, for they shall be as welcome as any. Little children, as soon as they are capable, ought to come to Christ; to come with their prayers and supplications to him, and to come to receive the blessing from him. 3. We may notice, that the call is laid down by Christ, in the most endearing manner to the little children: when the disciples oppose them, he takes their part, and gives them abundant encouragement; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Little children have participated of Adam's first sin, and of the malignant influences thereof; and they are made welcome to partake of the grace of the second Adam, and of that righteousness which reigns unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He takes it ill that any should exclude those whom he has received, or cast them out from the inheritance of the Lord; and

he tells his disciples, that of such is the kingdom of heaven. The children of believing parents belong externally to the kingdom of heaven, or are members of the visible church; and to them pertain the privileges of visible church-membership, as among the Jews of old; for the Lord has said it, "I will be your God, and the God of your seed;" and Acts ii. 39. it is said, "The promise is unto you, and your children."

From these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation:

"That as the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ; so, whatever discouragements they may meet with in coming to Christ, yet they have abundant encouragement from himself, who hath said it, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

In discoursing on this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To show that the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ.

II. To speak of some of those discouragements that young people may meet with in coming unto Christ.

III. To speak of the heavenly exercise the rising generation are called and invited unto, namely, to come to the Lord Jesus in the way of faith, or believing on him whom God hath sent.

IV. To give a hint at some of those encouragements which the Lord Jesus hath given to the rising generation to come unto him. And,

V. To make some application of the doctrine.

I. We proceed to the first thing proposed, namely, To show that the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ.

The youngest of you are sinners; a sinner needeth a Saviour; and Christ is the only Saviour, for there is no salvation in any other.

1. The youngest of you are guilty of Adam's first sin, Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into

the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" or, as it may be rendered, "in whom all have sinned." And Rom. v. 19. "For, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Thus you see, that you and all the posterity of Adam are sinners, by the imputation of Adam's first sin; even as all the redeemed from among men are righteous, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, their Head and Representative in the covenant of promise. In Adam all mankind died, 1 Cor. xv. 22; because they all sinned in him; for "the wages of sin is death." Infants are born under the power of spiritual death, and obnoxious to temporal and eternal death. Death hath passed upon them, and all mankind, for that they all have sinned, Rom. v. 12; that is, they sinned in Adam; for they could not sin in their own persons, prior to their being born in sin, and under the sentence of death, the proper desert of sin.

As mankind were made upright, and after God's image, Eccl. vii. 29; so the covenant was made with mankind, not merely with the first man, as one individual of the species, but it was made with him, as the federal head and representative of his posterity. His first sin therefore was not merely the sin of one man, but the insurrection of the whole human nature against God. It is true, the fallen angels did every one of them act for themselves, and involved themselves in sin and misery: but it doth not therefore follow, that we are free from Adam's first sin, because we were not present to give a formal personal consent to what was done. Shall we poor creatures take it upon us to prescribe to God himself, that he cannot take one method of transacting with angels, and another with mankind? It was a thing equal in itself, to deal with mankind in the way of a covenant and federal representation; and we may be assured it was the best method, seeing a God of infinite wisdom and goodness transacted with us in that manner. If Adam had stood, and his posterity had thus in him been confirmed in a state of happiness,

the whole human race had applauded it, and praised God for it. It was therefore a transaction good and equal in itself; and if men of corrupt principles object against it, they only discover the corruption of their hearts, by replying against God; and they may consider how unfit they are to judge in a matter wherein they are so much parties themselves, and with what veneration they ought therefore to receive what God himself has revealed concerning this matter in his word. Had all mankind been in paradise, they could not have declined it, that God should transact with them in the way of a federal representation. None could have been more fit to have represented Adam's posterity than himself. Mankind had a surer prospect of happiness by the good management of one, the fittest of mankind to act for the rest, than if every one had been left to act a part for himself; unless we suppose that some of Adam's posterity would have been fitter to act a good part for their own personal interest than Adam was to act a wise part for his own sake, and for the sake of all mankind his descendants. None of them could have had better abilities than Adam; and none of them could have had such strong motives to exert them, as the common parent of mankind, who, besides his personal interest, was made the trustee and representative of his race and posterity.

The youngest of you, yea, all mankind, are guilty of Adam's first sin. The inspired writer, Eccl. vii. 29, giving an account of the origin of all the sin, misery, and vanity, that now takes place among mankind, lodges the fault and blame of all, not upon one man, but upon the whole race of mankind: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." God made man upright, not merely one man, but he made mankind, the human nature upright, in the first original of it: and they (that is the human race, as represented by the first man) made apostasy from God, and sought out many inventions. Instead of resting in what God had found for them, they sought to

mend themselves; and the law of their creation could not hold them, but they would be at their own disposal, and follow their own sentiments. To the same purpose God saith to Israel, and in them to all mankind, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." And how great and inexcusable was the sin of the human race! Man had an easy law to obey; and as the moral law was of undoubted excellency, so was the positive law likewise: for it was for man's safety that he had one tree forbidden, that he might know that he as the vassal held all of God his superior; so that when all the creatures were subject to him, he might remember that he was still subject to God. This forbidden tree was a memorial to him of his mutable state, which was to be laid up by him for his greater caution: for man was created with a free-will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of; but his will was mutable to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof: it was in a manner a continual watchword to him against evil. And the forbidden tree taught Adam that his happiness did not lie in enjoying creatures, for there was a want in paradise: it was therefore in effect the hand of all the creatures pointing man away from themselves to God for happiness; and it was like unto a sign of emptiness, lifted up on the door of the creation, with this inscription, "This is not your rest." So that upon the whole man's ruin was most evidently owing to himself; "Man being in honour continued not, but became as the beasts that perish."

The youngest of you have the greatest ground to be humbled before God for this, that you are guilty of Adam's first sin. And if you look into your own hearts, ye will see the features of the first Adam's face, the very lineaments of his first sin, in the complexion of your own souls. His posterity are infected with his sinful curiosity (Gen. iii. 6); they are more concerned to know new things than to practise known truths. "Vain man would be wise, though he be born like the wild ass's colt." They are ready to hearken to the "instruction that causeth to err."

The eyes of their head often blind the eyes of their mind; and they are too much inclined to care for the body at the expense of the soul. How much are we inclined, with Adam, to hide our sin, or to extenuate it, and to transfer the guilt of it upon others? Seeing then that the sin of the first Adam is imputed to you, you can no otherwise be saved but by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, to the justification of life: and therefore every one of you has the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ, even of that grace which "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

2. The youngest of you have an infinite need of Christ; for you have lost the image of God, Rom. iii. 19. You want that original righteousness which Adam had; that knowledge of God, of his law, and of his will; that holiness of affections, and that conformity of will to the divine law, which human nature was endowed with at its creation; and, having lost the image of God, you have thereby lost your immortality, and are become subject to death. Man, at his creation, was a freeholder of heaven; but now, by sin, you are enslaved to your corruptions. You have lost that calm and serenity of conscience, which was the blessing of man's primitive state; and now you have an accusing conscience, and a storm is raised in your breast. You have lost that love to God and delight in him which Adam had, and that filial dependence upon him as a God and Father. You have lost all will and power to that which is spiritually good; and you are lost as to the very end of your creation, which was to see God in all his works, to gather in the revenue of his praise from all the inferior creatures; and to hand it up to him, and be the mouth of this lower part of the creation, by worshipping and praising God upon the earth, as the angels do in heaven.

The youngest of you, then, have an infinite need of Christ, who restored that which he took not away, Psal. lxix. 4. He restored glory to God, and honour to his law; and he only can restore the image of God to man, and bring man into favour with God.

3. The youngest of you stand in the greatest need of Christ; for your natures are corrupted, and you are carnal and altogether sinful. You are morally unclean, and your natures are polluted, Job xiv. 4: for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? no, not one." The Psalmist doth acknowledge his original corruption, Psal. li. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:"* and our Lord hath determined it, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John iii. 6. Man, considered in his corrupted state, is here called flesh; because the unrenewed man is fleshly and carnal, even in his most religious performances, and is carried out wholly by the principle of flesh within him. In supernatural mysteries he is blind and carnal, 1 Cor. ii. 14; so that flesh and blood cannot reveal them to us, but the Father, Matth. xvi. 17; and this fleshly mind doth move and operate powerfully in atheists and heretics. He is carnal in his performances, because, when he doth them, it is not from love to God, to exalt and honour him, but from love to himself, to avoid some judgment or other. God takes notice of the corruption of your nature, Gen. vi. 5. Psal. xiv. 2, 3. and maketh it lie heavy upon the consciences of his own people in their new birth; and, while they are in this life, they are exercised with a daily conflict with it: you ought therefore to take notice of it, and be humbled for it. Your mind is clouded, and filled with spiritual darkness, Eph. v. 8. You see not the beauty and glory of Christ nor the vileness of sin. That your understandings are corrupted doth appear from the vanity of your minds, from the swarms of vain thoughts which do lodge within you; and from your spiritual folly, that you prefer the worst things to the best; that you prefer a creature to God, earth to heaven, the body to the soul; and that you mind only the present time, forgetting eternity, and the world to come.

* See these texts explained and vindicated, in the review of Mr. Campbell's principles.

Again, your will is corrupted in its powers, in so far that it is not only weakened but disabled to duty. There is in your will an averseness to good, and a proneness to evil, Jer. xiii. last, Hos. ii. 7; and there is in your will an obstinacy and contumacy against God, so that you are wilful in an evil course, and refuse to be reclaimed, Jer. viii. 6. Prov. viii. 36. Ezek. xviii. 31. Your will is corrupted and perverse, in reference to your great and ultimate end; for the natural man seeks not God and his glory for his highest end, but himself, Psal. xiv. 2, 3. "They are all gone aside." Thou art gone aside from God as thy rest, and as thy last end. All things are from God, and therefore all things ought to be directed to God, and to his glory; but turning aside from God to the idol of self, thou hast usurped the throne of God, and hast gathered in the rents of his crown to thyself. This is thy case whilst thou art an unrenewed man; thou art wholly enslaved to sin, and canst do nothing but sin; hence the natural man is compared to an evil tree, that can bring forth nothing but evil fruit.

Your memory is corrupted; for you remember what you ought to forget, and forget what you ought to remember; you forget God's word and his works; you forget God's mercies and rods; you forget yourselves and your sins; you forget your convictions, and the working of God's Spirit upon your hearts; you forget God himself, his grace and love manifested in Christ Jesus, Is. lvii. 11, "Thou hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart:" and therefore are you so propense to all manner of evil; whereas the remembrance of God would be an excellent antidote against all sin.

Your conscience is defiled, Tit. i. 15. There is a darkness and vail upon it; whereas, if the candle of the Lord were lighted, thou wouldest be amazed at thyself, and at thy condition. Thy conscience by sin is become senseless and stupid, hence it is called a "seared conscience:" and if conscience at some times endeavours to exert itself, it is but weakly and faintly; conscience is too weak for cor-

ruptions. Like Balaam, men will press forward to their wickedness, though conscience stand like an angel with a sword in his hand to stop the way.

Your affections are corrupted, in that they are placed and fixed upon wrong objects; they were given to men to be wings to their souls in their motions after God, but now they are become clogs and impediments to us in our approaches to God. So corrupted are your affections, that they have usurped a dominion over your understanding, so that you judge as you affect, and not as matters are; hence you have drawn false conclusions about the state and condition of your own soul, as if it were safe, when you may well know that it is very bad.

You have ground to be humbled for your pollution by original sin; for original sin is the most diffusive sin; other sins are like particular sores, but this is the gangrene of the whole man; the understanding, the will, and the affections, are all defiled and infected with it: all other sins are like the streams, but this is the fountain; this is the flaming furnace in the inward man, and your actual sins, as so many sparks of hell, do flash forth from that burning lake within. Truly you are in a most deplorable condition; so that you are not capable to feel your misery, nor to get out of it, or return to God, from whom you have revolted, till sovereign grace interpose for your relief. Know therefore the desperate wickedness of thy heart, Jer. xvii. 9. Psal. xix. 13. A man's heart is like Peter's great sheet, Acts xi. 6, which was full of four-footed beasts, and creeping things, all unclean. Look inward, and you will find that your sinful words and actions, though very dishonouring to God in themselves, are yet nothing to the sea of corruption within you, where you cannot reach the bottom. And as you are children of disobedience, so you are children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, "by nature children of wrath, even as others." You are so by nature, that is, by original sin, which is now natural to you; by it you are "children of wrath," that is, you are worthy of wrath, liable to it, and under it: wrath

is your heirship, and you are born to wrath, as you are the children of the first Adam.

We say, considered in yourselves, you are liable to the wrath of God; for you have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and the Lord hath said it, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And you have broken God's law: now, thus saith the Lord, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Let us consider that wrath is gone as wide as ever sin went. When angels sinned, wrath brake in upon them as a flood, 2 Pet. ii. 4; and when Adam sinned, the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's justice and wrath. All men and women are under this wrath; the Gentiles, that know not God, are under it, Rom. ii. 12; and you, who are young ones, are under this same wrath of God; you were born under it, but will make yourselves twofold more its children if you do not flee in to Jesus Christ, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come. Nay, there needeth not be a surer mark of your being under the wrath of God, than that you never saw yourself to be under it, Is. xxvii. 11. 2 Thess. i. 8. Hos. iv. 6. No outward privileges can exempt you from this sad condition; though you be descended of godly parents, and can say, "We have Abraham to our father;" and though you have been baptized, and admitted to church privileges, yet are you "children of wrath as well as others." There is wrath upon your body, it is a piece of cursed clay; and there is wrath upon your soul, so that you can have no communion with God while in a natural unconverted state, Psal. v. 5. Eph. ii. 12. There is wrath upon all your enjoyments, upon your basket and upon your store, Deut. xxviii. 17; and you have no security for a moment from the wrath of God coming on you to the uttermost. In a little, and you know not how soon, death will be a dreadful messenger unto you; it will come armed with wrath, and put a charge and summons in your hand, to bid an eternal farewell to all things in this world, to appear before the tri-

bunal of God, and to go to another world, where you will have no portion but a treasure of wrath for evermore. It is in hell that the full floods of this wrath go over the prisoners for ever; for it will be their sad and dreadful condition to be separated from the presence of the Lord, and to depart from Jesus Christ into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, where their worm will not die and their fire shall never be quenched. Thus, by original sin, as well as actual transgressions, you are children of wrath; and unless your nature be changed by the renewing grace of God, you must lie to all eternity under this load of divine wrath, and be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." We might likewise tell you of your personal sins; your disobedience to your parents; your Sabbath-breaking; your neglecting of secret prayer, morning or evening; your lying and taking of the name of God in vain; for the sake of which things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience: and we might likewise warn you of your perishing condition, by reason of your sin of unbelief, and the need you have of the Spirit of Christ "to convince you of sin, because you believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ," John xvi. 8, 9. By this sin of unbelief, Christ is despised and rejected by you; and you "see no form nor comeliness in him, why he should be desired" by you, though he be truly the "desire of all nations, and more excellent than all the mountains of prey." You need not think to despise the love of the Father, the blood of the Son of God, and the promises of the gospel at an easy rate; for, Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

II. But we proceed to the second thing proposed, viz., To mention some of those discouragements that young people may meet with in coming unto Christ. And,

1. Some of you who are of the rising generation may be discouraged in coming unto Christ, from the temptations of Satan leading you to delay this blessed work; and se-

cretly suggesting this thought, That it is soon enough for you to come to Christ. But you are called to come. "The Master is come, and calleth for you" by name; and if you sit this call you may never get another. There are young sprigs, as well as old logs, burning in the flames of hell; and there are graves in the churchyard just of your length. Perhaps you are tempted to security: when the Lord visited you with the rod and affliction, you then poured out a prayer, and came under many resolutions; but, now that the blast of trouble is over, you are following your old course. Beware of despising the Lord's warnings: by these very troubles Christ giveth so many knocks at the door of thy young and sinful heart; and after all the refusals you have given him, he is still calling to you and saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. Or, you are tempted to despair: but consider that "Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him;" that the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, is great unto the heavens; and that he has proclaimed his name, "The Lord God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Or possibly you are tempted to think hardly of the Lord's way, or of his yoke as burdensome and uneasy; but know it for a certain truth, that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace:" and though the hearts of the children of Zion "may know their own bitterness, yet a stranger doth not intermeddle with their joy."

2. Some of you may be discouraged in coming unto Christ, by carnal friends and relations that endeavour to turn you away from him: for the best that ever lived have had trials of this sort; but the Lord Jesus "giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength; they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall walk and not weary, they shall run and not faint."

3. You may perhaps be discouraged, from fears of falling away in the time of trial: but trust in the Lord at all

times, for "in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:" and thus you shall be among the preserved in Christ Jesus; you shall be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation; you shall be delivered from every evil work, and preserved to his heavenly kingdom. The Lord hath said it, and faithful is he who hath promised, Zech. x. 12, "I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord."

4. Some of you may be discouraged, from a sense of your own sinfulness and unworthiness: but it is sinners that Christ came to save; and "worthy is the Lamb who was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The voice of angels is heard round about the throne, saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And you are warranted to trust his promise who hath said it, "Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord: and men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed," Psal. lxxii. 17. Are any of you discouraged from the greatness of your sin? then know, that Christ is the great God our Saviour, and that he hath proclaimed his name, saying, "It is I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," Isa. lxiii. 1, 2. Or are you discouraged from the power of your corruptions? Then take encouragement from his own word of promise, Rom. vi. 14, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Again, Mic. vii. 19, "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the midst of the sea: thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn to our fathers in the days of old."

III. We proceed now, in the third place, to speak of the heavenly exercise which the rising generation are called and invited unto, viz. to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, by believing on him whom God hath sent.

1. Then your coming to Christ supposeth, that there is

a call directed to you from a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, inviting you to come,—to come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Matt. xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rev. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely."

2. It supposeth that there is room in the love of God, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in God's covenant of promise, for your welcome and reception, who are the rising generation, Luke xiv. 22, "And yet there is room." John vi. 37, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no-wise cast out."

Young ones, you may be verily persuaded that Christ calleth you by name, Prov. viii. 17, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Christ is a public blessing; "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." As all the congregation of Israel had a good right and a warrant from God to look to the serpent lifted up, and be healed; so all that hear the gospel, particularly you who are the rising generation, have the call and command of God to look unto Christ and be saved, who is the "salvation of God to the ends of the earth." You have all access to this Tree of life, which groweth in the midst of the paradise of God, the "leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations;" and there is no cherubim nor flaming sword to hinder your approach unto it. Take a view of the encouraging promises; it is the voice of them all, Come, and

welcome to Jesus Christ. Through the whole gospel, Christ never once made an objection to any that came to him with their sinfulness or unworthiness; but all his complaints are of their backwardness and unwillingness to come to him, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly, John v. 40. The vilest sinners that ever were, when they came to him, were made welcome; Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, and Paul, who had persecuted the church of God. Consider, young ones, that it was the great design of the covenant of grace, that sinners, such as you are, might have a Saviour, Is. lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Consider with what pleasure the Lord Jesus undertook the work of your redemption, and with what cheerfulness he went through that labour of love. Psal. xl. 7, 8. he saith, "Lo, I come;" or "I hasten to come:" and when he is come, he saith, "It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish the work which the Father gave me to do;" viz. by pouring out his soul unto death, and making it an offering for sin, that we might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in his blood. Consider likewise, that it is the end of all the ordinances, that you may come unto Christ and be saved; for what saith the word? but that through Jesus is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. What say ministers? "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And what saith the sacrament? "This is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins unto many; drink ye all of it." Our Lord Jesus doth feed in the gardens, and he gathers lilies. The day of the sinner's closing with him, is the day of the gladness of his

heart. The hour, wherein the soul is determined to come to Christ, is that very hour wherein he rejoiceth in Spirit; and seeing the travail of his soul, is satisfied. His forbearance with sinners, and the welcome they get when they come, discover abundantly his good-will towards men. He accepts of a weak mint and essay at coming to him, even of a look, or the breathing out of the desires of the soul after himself, as the desire of all nations. He is most pressing and earnest in bearing home the calls and offers of his grace. How long-suffering is he, and with what patience doth he wait? even "till his head be filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night." Our Lord Jesus is much weighted with it, when sinners will not come to him; it is accounted by him an affronting him, and a treading the blood of the covenant under foot: it drew tears from his eyes, and he wept bitterly over Jerusalem, because, like many of you, they knew not the things that belong to their peace. The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; you may therefore trust him with your salvation; and seeing you are sinners of Adam's house, you are therefore warranted to intrust your souls with him, upon his own call in the word; for his name is called JESUS, "because he saveth his people from their sins." Thus you see, that you, who are the rising generation, are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and may expect a gracious reception from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

3. Your coming unto Christ implieth in it, that the powerful efficacy of divine grace is exerted in renewing you in the spirit of your minds, and making you willing in the day of the Mediator's power, Psal. cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And John vi. 44, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him."

4. Your coming unto Christ, implieth in it a conviction of your sinful and lost condition, as you are children of the first Adam; that you are children of wrath, and that your

iniquities do separate betwixt God and you; that you are fatherless and orphans; that you cannot help yourselves by your prayers, duties, or righteousness; and that you can have relief no otherwise but in him, in whom the fatherless do find mercy, Hos. xiv. 3. Although the light of the Spirit of God in conviction is like unto the light of the sun, making all things to appear as they really are; yet many see their sin and perishing condition only by discourse: but when the Spirit of God is bringing a soul to Christ, he fixeth the vain mind of a sinner upon the due consideration of sin in its nature, tendency, and end, John xvi. 8, 9. He discovers to the soul the real greatness of sin, by manifesting the real greatness of God against whom it is committed, Hos. iv. 4. Isa. vi. 3; and by giving realizing views of the justice of God, who will by no means clear the guilty; of the infinite majesty of God, Job xxxvii. 22; and of the holiness and purity of God, who hateth all the workers of iniquity. Hence the convinced sinner is pierced with perplexing grief, and is made to despair of any deliverance by the law or the first covenant, and is made to inquire into the way of relief, by Christ in the gospel, and to pant after that salvation that is in him, from present distress and future misery, Acts ii. 37.

5. Your coming unto Christ, implieth in it that you see him to be the great God your Saviour, or the Lord your righteousness: and your believing on him, or receiving him, as offered to you in the gospel, as your Redeemer. In short, coming to him is just believing the report of the gospel, that Christ is the Messiah, the mercy promised to the fathers; that he is the Saviour of the world; that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that he is given of God to you in the gospel; for this is God's record, "that he hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life." God giveth his Son to you, to be received by you, with a particular application to your own soul's case and exigencies. Christ is exhibited in the word, as the great propitiation, to be received

by you in particular upon the warrant of the free call, and encouraging promise of the gospel. As conviction is particular, "Thou art the man," saith the Spirit; so the application of faith is particular, though it be sometimes accompanied with but a small degree of sensible comfort, Is. xlv. 24.

6. Your coming unto Christ implieth in it your being espoused and betrothed to him, in a marriage covenant, as the one husband raised from the dead. "Ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," Rom. vii. 4. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord," Hos. ii. 19, 20. The soul going forth and beholding king Solomon with the crown upon his head in the day of his espousals, cometh to the marriage of the King's son, to be betrothed to him for ever; and the soul's motion to Christ is the fruit of God's promise of betrothing souls to himself, in loving-kindness and in tender mercies. You are thus, through grace, to come to and trust in the Lord Jesus for your all of righteousness and strength; to devote yourselves to him; to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him; to come with him from Lebanon, to look to him from the top of Amana and Hermon, from the lions' dens, the mountains of the leopards; and to take him for your all of consolation, who is the consolation of Israel.

IV. We proceed now, in the fourth place, to speak of some of those encouragements which the Lord Jesus hath given unto the rising generation to come unto him. And,

1. The full and ample call of Christ in the gospel, is most encouraging to engage poor sinners to come unto Christ, and particularly to encourage the rising generation to come unto him; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." The call is directed to all the sons of men, and giveth them a good warrant to come, Prov.

viii. 4, "To you I call, O men; and my voice is to the sons of Adam."

2. The promise of grace and strength to enable you to come is a noble encouragement to come to Jesus Christ, Psal. xxii. 30, 31, "A seed shall serve him.——They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, and that he hath done this." And the promise of welcome to all that come is most encouraging, John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out:" or, as the word may be rendered, Him that is a-coming unto me (him that is but essaying to come), I will in nowise cast him out.

3. That God is most glorified by those that come to Christ, is encouraging to come. He has condescended to gather in to himself the revenue of his glory, from the salvation of sinners by Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6, 7; and this is a most comfortable encouragement, nay, sure warrant for sinners to come to Christ; seeing, in this method of salvation by him, there is "glory to God in the highest, as well as peace on earth, and good will towards men," Luke ii. 14. Well, that very moment you come to Christ, you put the crown upon his head, and ascribe glory unto him; and his glory to all eternity shall be great in your salvation, Psal. xxi. 25. That moment you fall in with God's great and highest design of creating all things, and upholding them to this very day, which is, that the burden of the praise of Immanuel might be lifted up, and that to the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward you through Christ Jesus; and you put in your note in a concert with the angels and the redeemed from amongst men, in celebrating the grace of Christ, and that salvation he hath wrought, with the glory of God manifested therein: and that moment you come to Christ, there is a shout of song among the angels of God; for "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

4. God the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; John iv. 15, and this is a sure warrant, and

good encouragement for you to come unto Christ, and to believe on him as the Saviour of the world. This world had been the very suburbs of hell, upon the entrance of sin, if the Son of God had not been sent into it; and God had never received any thing more of a revenue of glory from men on the earth, if the Son had not been sent to be the Saviour of the world. But, behold, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and there is a shout among the seraphims, that "the whole earth is full of his glory," Is. vi. 3; for God had more glory from the obedience of his eternal Son, than from the obedience of all the hosts of angels since ever the world began. The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest, taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God; in the nature of man he finished this work of our redemption; and therefore every man that hears this everlasting gospel is warranted to come unto him, and to trust in him with a full confidence of faith, to obtain salvation by him, who is the Saviour of the world.

5. It is encouraging to you to come to Jesus Christ, that when poor sinners come unto him "he seeth the travail of his soul and is satisfied," Is. liii. 11. He had sore travail of soul, by the sword of justice awakening against him, that it might be quiet as to you; he had sore travail of soul, by the hidings of his Father's face, and drinking of the brook in the way, that torrent of vindictive wrath which interposed betwixt you and the city of God. But, so to speak, he reckons himself well rewarded, and is satisfied, for all the sore travail of his soul, in the garden of Gethsemane, in his agony, and upon the cross in Calvary, in his being, through his whole life, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; when he seeth the rising generation coming to him for life, for righteousness and strength; and seeth you coming to God, through him, as to your rest, portion, and everlasting blessedness.

V. We now proceed to make some application of this doctrine; and that, by addressing ourselves, 1. To the present generation. 2. To the rising generation.

(1.) Then, we would exhort you, who are the present generation, to imitate the example laid before you in our text, by bringing your children, and the rising generation, to Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant.

In order to this, you should be concerned to have some knowledge of Christ, and acquaintance with him yourselves: like these parents here spoken of, you must have some love to Christ, and an esteem of the grace of Christ, and an expectation of a gracious reception from him. The people here spoken of believed that Christ was both able and willing to help them; they came to Christ themselves, and brought their children, their best things with them, as an offering unto him. They had been with him, we may suppose, in some mount Tabor of manifestation, and found that it was good to be there; and therefore thought it was best to have their children there likewise. Imitate their example in this, that they had first a concern about their own souls, and then were deeply concerned about the souls of their children; and in that they were persuaded it would be well with the souls of their children if they were Christ's, and no way else. This seems to have been their conviction, and therefore they devoted both themselves and their children to the Lord Jesus, in whom alone the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Let this be your exercise, to bring your children to Christ, that they may obtain "the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation;" for, by nature, they are children of wrath, and under the curse. Bring them to him for instruction, that they may be all taught of the Lord; and great shall be the blessedness and peace of your children. Bring them to him for redemption; for he is a living Redeemer. Bring them to him for quickening and spiritual life; for they are dead in trespasses and sins, and Christ is the resurrection and the life. Bring them unto him, that their persons may be justified, and their natures sanctified; for he is "made of God unto us sanctification, and in him all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory."

Consider the marks and characters of such as may expect to succeed in bringing their children to Christ. 1. Such as make an acceptable offering of them to the Lord, bring them to Christ, as the altar of acceptance, Is. lvi. 7, "Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on mine altar." 2. They are importunate with the Lord for his grace and help; they are humble and self-denied, and after seeming repulses wait patiently on for an answer of peace, Matt. xv. 22, 24, 25, 28, "And, behold, a woman of Canaan cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil: but he answered her not a word. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me: but he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." 3. They maintain honourable thoughts of Christ, and they believe and trust to his word of grace and promise, John iv. 50, "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way: and himself believed, and his whole house."

But it may be for a lamentation, that many of us, instead of bringing our children to Christ, have provoked the Lord to leave both us and them. 1. By stoutness of heart, in not being humbled by the thought that both we and our children have sinned in the first Adam, that we have lost the image of God, and that our natures are universally corrupted. 2. By our ignorance of Christ; for, had we attained to more acquaintance and communion with him, we might have spoken of him as of a friend to our children. 3. By our unbelief, rejecting many an offer of Christ, and distrusting the promise given to us and to our children, Acts ii. 39. 4. By our carnality and worldly-mindedness; so that little of Christ was to be seen about us, either in our words or actions: and by our formality

in our closets and family duties. Whereas had we been spiritual and lively, we might have transmitted a savour of Christ to our children, and to others about us.

But let the present generation be excited to this necessary duty of bringing the rising generation to Christ, from a consideration of the encouragements the Lord hath given to them in his word. Consider, that as the promise is to you and to your children, so those who have brought their children to the Lord, have met with a gracious reception: thus, when Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, her offering was accepted. Consider, the Lord has promised to pour his Spirit upon your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, Is. xliv. 4, 5; and that he has said, Christ shall have a seed to serve him, who shall cause his name to be remembered to all generations, Psal. xxii. 30. and xlv. 17. Consider also, that God hath promised to circumcise your hearts, and the hearts of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, Deut. xxx. 6. In bringing your children to the Lord, in the strength of grace, fix your faith upon these his words of promise; and, in so doing, you may be assured of success in this duty and exercise.

Again, if the present generation would bring the rising generation to Christ, then they will be inclined, 1. To come to Christ themselves, as to a "living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious," 1 Pet. ii. 4; to abase themselves under the mighty hand of God, who "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:" to be grieved for their own sins, Psal. xxxviii. 18; to be as doves in the valleys, every one mourning for his iniquities: and to weep for the sins of the present generation, the profanity, atheism, lewdness, wantonness, drunkenness, and scoffing at religion, which prevails; for the public indignities done to the Lord Jesus, by all ranks, by the courts of judgment, by the state's invading the rights of the Redeemer's crown, and by church-judicatories, their silent and sinful connivance at all the dishonours done to the Lord of glory, and by intrusions made upon the

heritage of the Lord; thus taking away the bread of life from the souls of the rising generation. Let your hearts be deeply affected with the signs of the Lord's anger, and with the apostasy of this generation. It is matter of deep humiliation, that the false prophet and the unclean spirit are passing uncontrolled through the land; the grossest of errors are spread in all corners, to the perdition and destruction of the souls of men; the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is opposed and denied; the work of the Spirit of God, in the conversion and sanctification of sinful men, is assailed and subverted; self-love is declared to be the principle, rule, and standard of all religious actions, and self-interest to be their main and ultimate end. If these foundation-truths be buried, what shall become of the rising generation, but that they will lay aside all regard to God and religion, and be drenched in mere atheism and infidelity, to the dishonour of God, and to their own eternal destruction? What reason withal have you to lament the neutrality of some that have in them the root of the matter, and are, notwithstanding, continuing in a conjunction with those who have denied these foundation-truths, and are associated with those that have given up with Christ's Headship, and take their holding of the powers of the earth? It were easy to show that such an association is most unwarrantable; as thereby they partake of other men's sins, do not bring them to a conviction of such enormities as are censurable by the word of God, and thus suffer sin to lie upon them; while, in opposition to the rule of the word, they do not withdraw, but continue in fellowship with the workers of iniquity. It is most manifest, that such a course as this cannot possibly be a proper mean to assert and defend the royalties of the Redeemer's crown, nor to maintain the purity of doctrine, the government, worship, and discipline of his house, or to transmit them faithfully to posterity; which church-officers and church-judicatories are most sacredly bound to do, not only from the solemn oath of God, in our Covenants, National and Solemn League, but

by the very nature and duties of their office, by all the rules laid down in God's holy word, and by all the ties of nature; that is, by humanity itself, and the love and regard they ought naturally to have for their own posterity, the rising generation. Eli's coldness and neutrality in the matters of God, was severely punished in that good man; and it was in itself a dreadful judgment to the generation wherein he lived, being an effectual bar in the way of reformation; while the tribes of Israel being thereby hardened in their course of apostasy, were brought, as the fruit of it, under most dreadful marks of the divine displeasure. 2. If you, who are the present generation, would bring your children to Christ, then set apart some time for secret fasting, and the prayer of faith for your children, Job i. 5; and instruct them daily in the good ways of the Lord, encouraging them in well-doing, and correcting them for their faults. Talk with them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. vi. 7. Talk with them of their baptismal vows, and of their warrant to believe in the Lord Jesus, and of their duty to devote themselves to the Lord, as you have endeavoured, through grace, to do it in their name. Talk with them of the love of God, in sending his Son into the world, and of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; of their duty to love the Lord, and of the promise of grace, to enable them to love him, Deut. xxx. 6. Talk with them, and tell them of the works of God for this land, in our glorious reformation, and wonderful revolution; "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following: for this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death," Psal. xlviii. 12, 13, 14. Talk with them, and tell them of the solemn engagements these lands are under, to promote reformation, and to walk closely with God, by our Covenants, National and Solemn League; and tell them of our backslidings and defections from the Lord, and of the breaches

and violations of the vows of God. Talk with them of God's wonderful appearances for us, and of their duty to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Tell them of the ordinances, the pleasant palaces of Zion, where the King is held in the galleries; and of the promise of God, which are her bulwarks. Let it be your exercise, "to show to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, that you should make them known to your children: that the generations to come might know them; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments," Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5, 6, 7. Talk with them of God's covenant of grace and promise, which is his testimony established in Jacob, and his law appointed in Israel. Talk with them of the comprehensive blessing and promise of this covenant, that "this God is our God for ever and ever." Talk with them of the absoluteness and freeness of this covenant; and of the righteousness of Christ, its only proper condition, which being fulfilled, the rising generation, as well as others, may warrantably put in a claim for all its blessings in Christ's right, and for Christ's sake; a claim that will certainly be sustained in the court of heaven. And tell them to give themselves up to God, who hath raised Christ from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

We now proceed to conclude this discourse, by directing a word to you who are the rising generation, in a use of *Examination* and *Consolation.*

EXAMINATION.

1. It is necessary that you examine and try yourselves, whether or not you have as yet come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.

(1.) Then, is it your exercise, with young Josiah, 2 Chron.

xxxiv. 3. to prepare your hearts to seek the Lord God of your fathers? Early seekers of Christ shall not seek him in vain; for those that seek him early shall find him, Prov. viii. 17. Young seekers of the Lord have some insight into the evil of sin, and they are tenderly affected with it; young Josiah's heart was tender, and he wept before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 21, 27, 30; he wept not only for his original sin, and his actual sins, but for the sins of the land, and the people among whom he lived; and is this your exercise? The voice of prayer is heard among young seekers; they read the scriptures; the word of the Lord is precious to them; and they devote themselves to the Lord, to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Josiah, while he was yet young, in the sixteenth year of his age, "made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his testimonies with all his heart, and with all his soul," 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. But, in order to your devoting yourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duties, you must, by faith, take hold of his covenant of promise; seeing you can no otherwise be accepted, but by the righteousness of Christ, and no otherwise be assisted but by the grace of Christ, which is exhibited to you in the promise of the covenant.

(2.) Do you believe in the Son of God? Have you got a sight of the King in his beauty; has your soul been made to follow hard after him; are your desires drawn out towards the "Desire of all nations?" Is Christ precious to you, and "more than another beloved? for to those that believe he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. Do you account all things but loss and dung to win Christ, and to be found in him, not having your own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of Christ? Are you in him, as Noah was in the ark, or as the manslayer was in the city of refuge?

(3.) Have your hearts been made to burn with love to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you seen him to be the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? Do you love him, and breathe after fellowship with him, and

nearness to him, saying with the church, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon?" Song i. 7. Do you so love him as to keep his commandments, and breathe after holiness and conformity to him? Do you love his ordinances, and esteem a day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere, and delight in the place where his honour dwelleth? Do you love his people, and account them the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all your delight? Do you prefer Zion to your chiefest joy; and are you affected with the desolations of the sanctuary, and grieved for the affliction of Joseph? Do you rejoice when Christ is honoured; and do the reproaches of those that reproach him fall upon you? Is there nothing so humbling to you, as that you have so little love to Christ; nothing a greater burden to you, than the weakness of your love to Christ? Is there nothing so comfortable to you as the promise of the Spirit, to manifest the glory of Christ to your soul, John xvi. 14; and to shed his love abroad in your hearts? Then you are of the number of those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and of the little children of whom is the kingdom of God.

EXHORTATION.

We now proceed to a word of *Exhortation;* and may the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, persuade and determine you to come to HIM, who is come in the name of the Lord to save you, and who is come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly.

1. We exhort you to believe in the Son of God; for this is to come to Christ, and this is the work of God, to believe in him whom God hath sent. Believe the record of God concerning his Son; and "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life," 1 John v. 11, 12. You may well believe what God testifieth; but God testifieth that he hath given to you eternal life, and that this

life is in his Son, as its Spring and Fountain: he testifieth that he hath given to you his Son; and he that hath the Son hath life. Faith has Christ, it has the Son; and faith only has him, because God has given him; for faith can have nothing but what God gives. God gives Christ, and faith receiveth him, and hath him in possession: but he is given to many that do not receive him; and this is their unbelief, that they do not, and will not, receive God's gift of Christ, and of life in him. For though Christ be given in possession only to those that by faith receive him, yet Christ, and life in him, is given unto all of you that hear the gospel, in the offer and right to put in your claim to Christ, and life in him as yours; and every one of you is warranted to receive him as yours, laying claim to him, and to all the blessings of his purchase, as your own, in a way of grace. He is given of God to you, to be your Kinsman-Redeemer, Job xix. 25. Is. ix. 6. He is given to be a light to you that sit in darkness, in the region and shadow of death; to be a Ransomer, to proclaim the gospel jubilee, and liberty to the captives, Is. lxi. 1. He is given to be a covenant to the people, Is. xlix. 8; to be the new-covenant Head, the Surety and Trustee of the covenant, and to dispense all the blessings of the covenant. He is given to thee, man or woman, to be a Restorer of paths to dwell in, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; to be thy Head and Husband, to betroth thee unto him for ever; to be a leader to thee through all thy dark bewildered steps; to be a Saviour to thee from all thy sins; to be a Physician to heal all thy plagues; and to be the Salvation of God to the ends of the earth.

What God hath said and recorded, you may, and ought to believe: now God hath said, that he offereth and giveth to you life, in Christ the Prince of life; that he giveth to you life, and Christ the Fountain of life. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, 1 John v. 10. Unbelief doth consist in discrediting what God hath said. Now the sin of unbelief is not your disbelieving that God giveth

Christ to the elect, or that he giveth Christ to others; but your not believing that God offereth and giveth Christ to you in particular, and that you have a warrant and right to accept of him. Thus it was with the Jews; the promise was to them and to their children, Acts ii. 39; but they did not credit the word of salvation sent unto them, but rejected the counsel of God against themselves. When the brazen serpent was lifted up before all the congregation of Israel; if multitudes of them perished by not looking up to the brazen serpent, it was not because the remedy was not offered and given to them as well as the rest of the congregation, but because they did not look to it, nor credit God's word that a look would cure them.

2. We exhort you to come to Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant: and it is the voice of Christ to you who are the rising generation; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Our Lord commandeth you to be called; and we say to you, as it was said to the blind man, Mark x. 49, "Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee." He calleth for your hearts; "My son, give me thy heart." He calleth you to come into a marriage-relation to him, and to sweet fellowship with him, upon the mountains of myrrh, and the hills of frankincense, till the day break, and the shadows flee away. He calleth you to come, with all your sins, to be pardoned; with all your plagues, to be healed; with all your wants, to be supplied; and with all your burdens, to be relieved.

As to you who are advanced in years, though it is in youth that God ordinarily brings in to himself, yet he is sovereign that way. O sinner, if forty, if fifty years old, we say, yet even now is the word of this salvation sent unto you; rise, for he this moment calleth you. Thus he calleth some at the eleventh hour; and thus Paul was called when advanced in years, 1 Cor. xv. 8, "And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

And if you who are the rising generation, would be

directed how to come, then come, depending on God's word of promise for grace and strength to come; for he has said it, Psal. xxii. 31, "They shall come, and they shall declare his righteousness." Come, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, Heb. xii. 2; and say with the church, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Come in a mourning frame, that you have been so long a-coming, that you have been amongst the last to bring back the King: and come rejoicing, that you are yet called and invited to come; for "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

Come then to him with all your hosannas, and praises of faith, Matt. xxi. 15, 16; for out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he has perfected praise. Come to him with all your supplications and prayers of faith, to be perfumed with his incense; and come to him with the confidence of faith. Come, and in coming to him, depend upon the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of faith; for it is the work of the Spirit to glorify Christ, John xvi. 14. And when Jesus is seen in his glory, then your souls will follow hard after him, as the chariots of Amminadib; and the language of your hearts will be, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God."

SERMON II.

GEN. xxviii. 10—13, 19.—"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night,——and lay down in that place to sleep: and he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, and the God of Isaac.—— And he called the name of that place Bethel."

WE may notice, from these words, and their connection in this chapter, that Jacob had this vision in his youth, and in the day of his distress, when he was in exile from his father's house, and had fled from the face of Esau his brother, who sought his life.

In the words, we may remark more particularly, 1. The season of this manifestation; it was when Jacob was going from Beersheba towards Haran, going from his native country to a foreign land, in compliance with the call of God's Providence. 2. The manner in which the manifestation was given; it was in a night vision; and this was one of the ways in which God spake unto the fathers; but he hath now, in these last times, spoken unto us by his own Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. 3. The manifestation itself: Behold, "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached heaven." This ladder was an emblem of Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And the angels are said to *ascend* and *descend*, as being, at his command, in the administration of his kingdom, Heb. i. 14. John i. 51. And he saw "the Lord standing above it;" God as in Christ reconciling the

world to himself, proclaiming his covenant of promise, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." 4. The gracious and kindly impression this manifestation made upon Jacob; he says, "This is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven. And he called the name of the place Bethel." *Bethel* signifies *the house of God;* though it was a solitary place, yet the divine presence made it to Jacob the house of God, and the gate of heaven.

From these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation:

"That the time of youth is a special season of Bethel manifestations, wherein God doth manifest to the souls of men the glory of Christ, and doth reveal himself, as a reconciled God in Chr.st, and condescends to show unto them his holy covenant of promise."

In discoursing on this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To offer a few remarks concerning these Bethel-manifestations, which the Lord frequently condescends to bless the sons of men with in the days of their youth.

II. Speak a little of these manifestations, and show what it is he doth manifest and reveal to the rising generation, in the days of their youth. And,

III. Apply the doctrine.

I. We proceed to the first thing proposed, to offer a few remarks concerning these Bethel-manifestations, which the Lord frequently condescends to bless the sons of men with in the days of their youth. And,

1. We remark, that there is a Bethel-manifestation of Christ in his glory, in the morning of conversion, when the soul is first visited with the day-spring from on high. This was the privilege of Paul, in the day that he was effectually called, Acts ix. compared with 1 Cor. xv. 8. "And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." The day of his conversion was his birth-day, wherein he was born from above. He was a man advanced in years, who had long opposed the gospel, and

rejected the offers of grace; and therefore he looks on himself as one born out of due time: yet it was a blessed time to his soul, and the best day that ever he saw; it was to him a day of manifestation, wherein he saw the holy One and the Just, and heard the voice of his mouth. So is it, in some measure, to all that are effectually called. Though every one cannot distinctly tell the day and time of his first meeting with Christ; yet every one of them has got such a glimpse of the glory of Christ, as has drawn his heart, his trust, and the desires of his soul, towards himself.

2. We remark, that the Lord's people have Bethel meetings with Christ in the morning of a renewed manifestation, after they have been mourning without the sun, and walking in darkness, having no light. They may be said to attain such Bethel-manifestations, (1.) When he manifests himself unto them in the glory of his person, in his offices, and in the freeness and permanency of his love and grace; and in his comfortable relations, mediation, and powerful intercession, John xiv. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;—and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (2.) When he looseth their bonds, and maketh them to walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, Psal. cxvi. 16; hearing their prayers, and giving them gracious and comfortable returns: "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Psal. cxvi. 1, 2, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, my supplications: because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." (3.) When their souls are made, in a lively exercise of faith, to feed upon his word; when he speaketh into their hearts, and converseth with them by his word, and the motions of his Spirit upon their souls, Luke xxiv. 32, "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (4.) When they attain, through grace, a nearness to God, Song i. 3, "The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad,

and rejoice in thee: we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee." Sometimes Christians have attained a greater nearness to the Lord, than they thought possible on the earth, and have been made to cry out, "Hold, Lord, for I can hold no more, for I am an earthen vessel;" because their old bottles were like to break to shivers, with a fill of that new wine of fellowship and communion with God. (5.) When they have had such manifestations, that he has drawn by the vail, and they have seen the King in his beauty, and beheld the land that is afar off; their graces having been excited, and drawn forth into a lively exercise, by fresh influences of the Holy Spirit; and the Beloved has come into his garden, to see the beds of spices, and to gather lilies. (6.) When they have had such intimations made unto them as, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" and "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee:" when, with power and evidence of his Spirit, he saith "to them who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not;" and encourageth them with such a word, "Fear not, I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified; he is risen, as he said; come, see the place where the Lord lay." (7.) When he giveth new and unwonted communications unto their souls; when he giveth strength to them in their weakness, and life to them in their deadness; when he giveth to them peace and pardon, and giveth to them himself, which is more than all other blessings, Rev. ii. 28, "And I will give him the morning star." He giveth them sometimes grapes from Eshcol, the first-fruits of the land of promise, a Pisgah-view of the land afar off, a foretaste of glory, some drops of that wine that goeth down sweetly, making the lips of them that are asleep to speak. So that, even here below, they are made to begin some notes of the song of the redeemed; and have such communion and fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, that it is to them the gate of heaven, the suburbs of glory.

3. We remark, that there are some means and ordinances of God's appointment, wherein the followers of Christ are

privileged with these manifestations. It is in the sanctuary, in the attendance upon public ordinances, that they see his power and his glory, Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. It was in hearing the gospel preached, that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith; and it was by the ministry of the word, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, to attend to the things that were spoken. It is in the field of meditation, that they get sometimes a refreshing view of the glory of the Lord: "When I remember thee upon my bed," saith the Psalmist, "my soul followeth hard after thee." And it is in reading and searching the Scriptures, that they behold the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "Often," said an eminent saint, "have I seen the invisible God; and when I saw him, it was in his word." It was in the duty of prayer, Gen. xxxii. 24, 30, that Jacob had a most remarkable manifestation of the glory of Christ. He wrestled with the Angel of the covenant till the breaking of the day, "and he blessed him there: and Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

4. We remark, that there are some particular seasons wherein the Lord condescends to give manifestations to his disciples and followers; such as, when they are lamenting after the Lord, and seeking him with a holy restless activity, Song iii. 3, "I sought him whom my soul loveth. ——It was but a little I passed from them, when I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." Or when humbled for their own sins, and the sins of the land, which have provoked him to withdraw: thus, when Daniel was exercised in this manner, it was said to him, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved," Dan. ix. 23. Or when suffering for the cause and interest of Christ: thus Moses had a vision of Christ in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, when he was bearing the reproach of Christ at the back of the mount Horeb, and was there feeding Jethro's sheep: and John, when in the isle of Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus, had the most refreshing manifestations of the glory of Christ, whose countenance is like the

sun shining in his strength. Or when a person has difficult work to undertake at the Lord's command: thus Moses and Aaron had a manifestation of the glory of the Lord, and could say, "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us." Or when a soul is tenderly affected with Christ's absence, and is mourning because the Comforter is far away, John xx. 11, 15, 16, "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.——Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary: she turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Mary Magdalene came, and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord." Or in times of affliction. So was it with Jacob: he was destitute and afflicted, being an exile from his father's house; but he had a manifestation of the glory of the Lord; and "he called the name of the place Bethel."

5. We remark, that frequently the most sensible and comfortable manifestations are attained to in the days of youth; for not only to Jacob, but to Solomon also, did the Lord appear in his youth, 1 Kings iii. 5, "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night."

6. We remark, that sometimes these manifestations are surprising. Jacob saith, "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." They fill the heart with a holy awe and reverence of God; "How dreadful is this place!" said Jacob: and they bring along with them some sweet taste of heart-warming, soul-refreshing communion with God; "This is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven." Christ is the gate by which the righteous enter in; and a meeting with him brings the soul to the suburbs of heaven.

7. We remark, that the memory of manifestations of God in youth, remains with the saints through their pilgrimage; thus Jacob could not all his life forget the manifestations of God in his youth; and the thoughts of them were fresh and supporting to him on his deathbed, Gen.

xlviii. 3, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in Canaan, and blessed me." And the Lord himself doth keep a record of his gracious visits to souls in their youth: hence it was that he said to Jacob, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst the vow."

8. We remark, that frequently the Lord doth make use of his rod in the days of youth. As we have formerly observed, it was Jacob's case; so, if it is thy case, reader, then plead the promise of God's covenant; "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant," Ezek. xx. 37. The design of the rod is to bring you into the bond of the covenant; and the Lord himself hath undertaken to bring you, though you are neither able nor willing to come of yourselves. This bond of the covenant will not rot in the grave, for it is an everlasting covenant; and the blessings of this covenant are free to needy sinners, such as you are: hence the blessings of the covenant, for their freeness, are called *mercies*, the "sure mercies of David." Mercy, I am sure, will answer thy case, be what it will: O, then, trust a promising God, and put the work in his hand, who has said it, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant."

II. We proceed, in the second place, to speak a little of these manifestations, and to show what it is which God doth manifest and reveal to the rising generation. And,

1. They get a manifestation of Jesus Christ, the Mediator betwixt God and man. Jacob saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven: this ladder was an emblem of Christ, who is called, "The way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And he is the Mediator between God and man, through whom we approach unto God. Christ the Son of God, like Jacob's ladder, was set up on the earth, in his incarnation and birth at Bethlehem; and he reached heaven, in his Deity or divine nature. Thus, when he was upon earth, he affirmed of himself that he was likewise in heaven: "No man hath ascended to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man

which is in heaven." The ladder, the foot of it upon the earth, and the top of it in heaven at the same time, was an emblem of Christ in his person, God-man, 1 Tim. iii. 16, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Heaven and earth are brought together, through Christ's mediation; and there is an union by him betwixt God and man, an union of peace and reconciliation, an union of friendship, and an union of end and design. By him also, there is a blessed intercourse and communion betwixt heaven and earth; for, through him, by one Spirit, we have access to the Father, and come to God, the Judge of all; and, through him, we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Through him, in short, we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, through the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, by the vail of his flesh. This ladder is fixed fast in the earth, in his satisfaction upon the cross, in his death and deep humiliation; and the top of it is fixed as fast in heaven, in his ascension, exaltation, and intercession within the vail. It is a way and a ladder for the inhabitants of the earth: the foot of it is not set in hell, for the fallen angels; no, there is a great and an unpassable gulph betwixt heaven and that place of separation from God: but the foot of it is set upon the earth, for the sons of men; and every man, young or old, who hears this everlasting gospel, is invited, called, and warranted to come to God through Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." There is no cherubim or flaming sword to obstruct your access; but "the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely."

2. The Lord doth manifest and reveal himself to sinners in the days of their youth, as he is a God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Jacob, in this vision which he had in his youth, saw a ladder, an emblem of Christ in

his mediation; and he saw the Lord standing above it, proclaiming his covenant of promise, saying, "I am the God of Abraham thy father."

God is seen, in Christ, in his ineffable glory, in the glory of all his infinite perfections: he is the eternal, self-existent Being; he is JEHOVAH, and his glory he will not give to another. The glory of his infinite holiness and justice is seen in Christ, "whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

He is seen, in Christ, as a reconciled God, well pleased for his righteousness' sake, Matth. iii. 17, "Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God is well pleased with Christ, and with all those who are in Christ; and those who are in Christ are well pleased with Christ, and well pleased with God, as he is in Christ: for God, as he is in Christ, is a reconciled God; yea, he is "in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" willing, on Christ's account, to be reconciled to any man of the world whatsoever who hears this gospel; and "beseeching sinners to be reconciled to him" through Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. God is so well pleased with the satisfaction of Christ, that he doth entreat and obtest sinners to believe his love and good will to them, to stand no more at a distance from him, but to take the benefit of peace, of pardon, of grace and glory, for Christ's sake; and, upon the account of what he hath done, "who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

God is seen in Christ as a promising God: Gen. xxviii. 14, 15, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed:" and, "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." The divine presence is promised; preserving and persevering grace is promised; life is promised in all its fulness; "he commandeth the blessing out of Zion, even life for evermore."

God, as he is in Christ, is a giving God: "The land

whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed," Gen. xxviii. 13. The earthly Canaan was a type and figure of heaven: the inheritance of the saints in light is given of God, here in the earnest of it, and hereafter in the full possession of it; for he giveth grace and glory, Psal. lxxxiv. 11; he giveth the new heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; a heart to know the Lord, to love the name of the Lord, the heart of flesh. In the first covenant, man was to give something to God; in the new covenant, God giveth all things to sinful men, in a way of free and sovereign grace: he giveth them to inherit all things; he will be to them a God: and he giveth to them the kingdom; "Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

God, as he is in Christ, is a forgiving God; he has proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." He is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and "not imputing their trespasses unto them;" because he "hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. In Jesus, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Through him, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; and we receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in him. Through him, God has promised to "be merciful to our unrighteousness, and to remember our sins and iniquities no more." It is therefore a full and free indemnity, which God has published through Christ in the gospel.

Again, God, as he is in Christ, is a God of love, 1 John iv. 8, 16. He is not only loving, but he is love itself; and, by the exercise of faith, you are to believe, realize, and be persuaded of his love to your souls through Jesus Christ, and for his sake alone, 1 John iv. 16, 10, "We have known, and believed the love that God hath to us; God is love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

This God is known and revealed in Christ, as our own God; "God, even our God, shall bless us:" and "he that is our God, is the God of salvation." Have you seen God as he is in Christ? You can have no saving, nor any comfortable discovery of God to your sinful souls, but as he is in Christ: out of Christ he is a consuming fire. God is only known and revealed in Christ as love, as the portion of his people: and if you have not seen him, as he is in Christ, standing above Jacob's ladder, you have never yet known him, nor seen him as he is.

3. God doth frequently manifest and reveal to sinners, in the days of their youth, his holy covenant of promise. Jacob, in his youth, saw this ladder, an emblem of Christ, and JEHOVAH standing above the ladder, proclaiming his covenant of promise, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac;" and "I will be with thee, and will keep thee." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he showeth them his covenant; he showeth them the freeness, the excellency, the stability of his covenant, and the great and glorious blessings and privileges that are in his covenant.

He showeth them that he himself is in the covenant: thus he said to Jacob, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: I will be with thee, and will keep thee." Hence the great promise of the covenant, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," Zech. xiii. 9, "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." God has made over himself to you in the covenant, as your God in Christ's right; and as your God in a way of promise, to be believed and relied on through Christ; as your God in a way of grace, and not in a way of merit or in a way of works. Beware then that you reject not the counsel of God against your own souls.

Christ is seen to be in the covenant, as the Mediator of the covenant; as the Testator of the covenant; as the contracting party upon man's side in the covenant; as having fulfilled the condition of the covenant in his everlasting righteousness; as having purchased all the blessings of the

covenant; and as dispensing all the grace of the covenant to needy destitute sinners of Adam's house.

The Holy Spirit of promise is seen to be in the covenant, as your Teacher, Comforter, and Sanctifier; and you are to believe in the Holy Ghost, and trust him to quicken you under your deadness, and to enlighten you under your darkness; and you are to depend upon him, to manifest the glory of Christ to your souls, and to bring the words of Christ to your remembrance, John xiv. 26. and xvi. 14.

The blessing is in the covenant, Gal. iii. 13, 14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." The blessing of a free-gifted righteousness is in the covenant; the everlasting righteousness of Messiah the Prince, which reigneth to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord: the blessing of the pardon and remission of sins is in the covenant; together with the blessing of fellowship with God in his ordinances here, and the immediate enjoyment of him in heaven hereafter.

In short, the presence of God to be with you, is in the covenant: thus he said to Jacob, "I will be with thee, and will keep thee." His presence to be with you, in prosperity and adversity, in life and at death; to be with you, to comfort you in all your tribulations; to support you under all your burdens; to direct you in all your straits; to guide you with his counsel while here, and at death to receive you to glory. The Lord's keeping and safe preservation is in the covenant, to keep you from sin, from Satan's devices and temptations; to preserve your souls, in your going out and coming in, Psal. cxxi; to deliver you from every evil work; and to preserve you to his heavenly kingdom.

The faithfulness, power, and mercy of God are all in the covenant, to secure the accomplishment of all he hath promised, Gen. xxviii. 15, "I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Heaven, and the kingdom that cannot be moved, is in the covenant of promise. Canaan was a type of heaven; and God said to Jacob, "The land on which thou liest will I give thee."

Death, the passage to heaven, is in the covenant; "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

We proceed to apply the doctrine in a use of *Examination* and of *Exhortation.*

EXAMINATION.

1. They who have seen God as in Christ, and to whom JEHOVAH hath revealed his holy covenant of promise, are such as, through Christ, have "believed in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God," 1 Pet. i. 21. They trust to the promise, and wait for the accomplishment of the promise, through many contrary-like appearances and trials of their faith, because they judge him faithful who hath promised; and they plead the promise even in their dark hours, with the eagerness of faith, Psal. cxix. 49, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

2. They who have seen God as he is in Christ, have avouched him for their God, Psal. xvi. 7, "O my soul, thou hast said to the Lord, thou art my Lord." They have joined themselves to the Lord, to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him. They have taken hold of God's covenant of promise; and as they account it a faithful saying, so they judge it worthy of all acceptation, "That Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom they are chief."

3. They cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Having seen him who is invisible, seen the glory of the invisible God in the person of Christ, they "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Heb. xi. 25.

EXHORTATION.

We conclude this discourse, exhorting you to believe, and be persuaded of the promise of God, Heb. xi. 13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" in the accomplishment of them, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Believe the promise, as spoken to you, and trust to it, as a ground of faith to your souls; for it is a covenant of promise; and the promise is published to you, that it may be credited, believed, and trusted to by you. The great promise of the covenant is, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:" and this promise is given to you; for "there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." It is given to be received by your faith and your trust in the mercy, love, grace, and faithfulness of God, brought near unto you, as the ground of your assured confidence. Nothing is more free than a promise; and the freeness of the covenant is a great encouragement to you to believe and trust in him who has given it. It is a covenant of grace, which was made for the unworthy and ill-deserving, and none else; and therefore, though unworthy, thou art warranted to trust to God's covenant of promise.

SERMON III.

GEN. xxviii. 20, 21.—"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me,——then shall the Lord be my God." Jer. iii. 4, 19. "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me."

IN these words we may notice, 1. What was Jacob's exercise in the days of his youth: he vowed a vow at Bethel, saying, "If God will be with me," or, as it may be read, seeing Jehovah will be with me, seeing he has promised to be with me, and has revealed his covenant of promise unto me, has made over himself to me in the covenant as my God; therefore this same JEHOVAH "shall be my God." I trust to him, as a promising God, that he will be my God, through Christ Jesus; I depend on him as my God, and devote myself to his service, worship, and obedience: "Then the Lord shall be my God." This exercise of Jacob, in the days of his youth, is recorded, as a pattern worthy of your imitation, who are the rising generation.

2. In the other place of Scripture, Jer. iii. 4, we have God's own warrant to take hold of his covenant of promise in the days of our youth: "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?"

3. Here, then, we have an encouraging promise of grace, to enable us to put in our claim to this wonderful relation, in which God is pleased to stand to us in the new covenant: "And I said, thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me."

From these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation.

"That as the time of youth is an especial season of taking hold of God's covenant of promise; so we ought to depend upon God's promised grace, to enable us to come personally into the bond of the covenant."

In discoursing on this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To show, that as God, in the covenant, stands in the relation of our God; so we ought, in the application of faith, to say, "The Lord shall be my God."

II. To speak a little of the import of these words, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?"

III. To offer a few remarks concerning the encouraging promise of grace, to enable us to put in our claim to God, as standing in the relation of a Father in Christ Jesus unto us, who are fatherless, destitute sinners of Adam's house.

IV. To apply the doctrine in a few inferences.

I. We proceed to the first thing proposed, namely, To show, that as God in the covenant stands to us in the relation of our God, so we ought, by the application of faith, to say, "The Lord shall be my God." And this head shall be considered in a few observations.

1. We may observe, that man, by the breach of the first covenant, forfeited all right and claim to Jehovah, as his God: but Christ, as the second Adam, in virtue of his fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, by his everlasting righteousness, acquired a new claim and title to this relation; hence it is said of him, as the new-covenant Head, Psal. lxxxix. 26, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." Sin had made this world, which was like Eden, the garden of the Lord, to become like the valley of the son of Hinnom, a place of crying and howling; and it had been eternally so, if the Son of God had not appeared on our behalf, and become the contracting party on man's side in the cove-

nant of grace: but behold, in this howling wilderness, a cry is heard from the new-covenant Head, as a public person, in the name of all his followers, "Thou art my God, the Rock of my salvation." Hence his words to the disciples, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

2. We may observe, that the great and leading blessing of the new covenant, is the promise of a saving relation to God, as our God in Christ Jesus, Jer. xxxi. 33, "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after these days, saith the Lord,——I will be their God, and they shall be my people." I will be their God; this is the soul's blessedness: an interest in God, as our God, is the summary of all happiness; it is heaven itself, and the very heart and first glory of heaven, Rev. xxi. 7. The Author of this relation is God himself; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." They shall be an accepted people, through Christ, the new covenant Head, accepted through his righteousness; and they shall be my people, a holy and sanctified people, through the Spirit and grace of Christ, the Head of the redeemed from among men. The Author of this relation is God himself; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will be," speaks grace, and "they shall be," imports the same. And it being God who says, "I will be, and they shall be" this makes it infallibly sure, and lays the most solid foundation for faith and hope. The ground of this grant of grace, and the title to claim it, is God's covenant: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will be their God." The right shall be conveyed to them in the way of a covenant, the covenant made with Christ the second Adam, and representative of his seed, a covenant that stands fast in his suretyship and satisfaction; or upon the account of his doing and dying, "I will be their God:" upon the account of what Christ has done, which is the greatest of doings, the most noble and glorious that possibly can be done; I will do this; I will do all I can do, all that a God can do for them, "I will be their

God." Man could do nothing for himself; but "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." When man could do nothing, then God did do great things, the greatest things, things that angels and men shall eternally wonder at; for he made over himself to man in the way of his covenant, that stands fast with Christ: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

3. We observe that your privilege is great, in this, that God is your God through Christ Jesus, Deut. xxxiii. 29, 26, 27, "Happy art thou, O Israel, O people saved by the Lord: for there is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." You are happy, for God is your God; God the Father, is your Father to love you; God the Son, is your Redeemer to save you from your sins; God the Holy Ghost is your Teacher, your Comforter, and Sanctifier. All God's perfections and attributes are yours; his mercy is yours, to pardon you; his wisdom is yours, to direct you; his power is yours, to protect you; his omniscience is yours, to watch over you; his holiness is yours, to sanctify you; his goodness is yours, to bestow all good things upon you; his omnipresence is yours, to attend you, and solace you in all places and conditions. In short, his eternity is the date of your happiness; his faithfulness is your security, insuring the accomplishment of all he has promised; his justice is yours, to punish your enemies; and his all-sufficiency is yours, to make you completely happy. His perfections, as made over to you in Christ, are a suitable antidote to all the evils which sin has brought upon you; his wisdom cures your ignorance, his grace your guilt, and his power your weakness; his mercy is a remedy for your misery, his faithfulness for your inconstancy, his holiness for your impurity, and his fulness supplieth all your wants.

Yes, seeing that God is your God, all his promises are

yours, all his gifts and graces are yours, and all his creatures are yours; his creatures on earth are yours to sustain you; his angels are yours, to guard you and encamp about you; this world is your sojourning place, and his heavens are your country and inheritance.

It follows from all this that he will be your God, not for days, months, or years, but every day, in every place, and in every condition; for he said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will be your God in all the troubles you meet with, and will support you; he will be your God at death, Psal. xlviii. 4; and when all earthly comforts fail you, he will not fail you. He will be your God after you are dead, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. That which was spoken to Moses at the bush, was spoken for you as well as for him, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:" for the dead in Christ do live unto him, and with him; and therefore their bodies, which are rotting in the grave, shall rise again; for he is the God of the whole man, and the body is a part of the man. He will be your God for ever in heaven, for of them who are there it is said, "God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Happy art thou then, O Israel, who—like unto thee? a people saved by the Lord!

4. We observe, that you are not only warranted in a way of faith, to apply this great promise of the covenant to yourselves, but grace is promised to enable each of you, in a way of believing, to say, "The Lord is my God." Thus Jacob, in the exercise of faith, says in the text, "The Lord shall be my God:" and this language of faith has been the dialect of the church in all ages, Psal. xci. 2, "I will say of the Lord, He is my Refuge; my God, and in him I will trust." The Lord saith in the promise, "I will be thy God;" and faith, in applying the promise, saith, "The Lord shall be my God: I will say of the Lord, he is my God." I will say in a way of believing, what God has said in a way of promise; for the promise is given to be trusted to, to be credited, to be believed. Every one that reads

the promise, is warranted to believe it with application; for the promise is spoken to you by God, as much as it was spoken to Judah, Jer. xxxi. 33, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The Lord saith, "I will be thy God," for Christ's sake; and do you therefore say, with assured confidence, "The Lord shall be my God," for Christ's sake. The grace of the Holy Spirit is promised to you, to enable you to say it, Zech. xiii. 9, "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." I will say, "It is my people," through Jesus Christ, and his righteousness and satisfaction; and they shall say, "The Lord is my God," through Jesus Christ, and his righteousness and satisfaction. God cannot be the God of a sinner, such as you are, otherwise than through Christ; and he will be the God of every sinner that puts in his claim to him through Christ, and in his right. Are you pleased with the great grant and promise of the covenant, "God for your God?" have your eyes been opened, to see Christ in the glory of his person? and has your heart been made to acquiesce in the tenor of the covenant, the holding of grace, and through the righteousness of Jesus? Then you have said it, "The Lord is my God;" and you may know, for your comfort, "That this God is your God for ever and ever, and will be your Guide even unto death."

God giveth himself to you, in the promise, for your God. Christ is a Prophet, to reveal God to you; he is a Priest, to bring you to God; and he is a King, to keep you with God: therefore trust to him, and depend upon him, as the Mediator betwixt God and you. Just now God is willing to be your God; this is the season of mercy, to obtain God for your God: and I can tell you, as certainly as God is in heaven, that if you do not take him for your God, you shall repent it to all eternity.

But can you not say, that, in some measure, this is your exercise, through grace, to make choice of God for your God, Psal. xvi. 2. and to give yourselves to the Lord, 1 Cor. viii. 4? Are you not in so far pleased with the con-

trivance of salvation, because it is so much calculated for debasing self, and exalting free grace?

God giveth himself to you through Christ; and seeing this to be the case, it is your great business, in the strength of grace, to accept of him in Christ for your chief end, to aim at his glory in all you do, 1 Cor. x. 31; to accept of him as your chief happiness, the rest of your souls, and the delight of your hearts, Psal. cxvi. 7; to take his will and law for your rule, and to accept of him in Christ, for your portion for ever, Lam. iii. 24. Surely it is your part to devote yourselves to him, and to present yourselves in soul and body a living sacrifice, acceptable through Christ, the gospel-altar, Is. lvi. 7. You are to live to him who died for you, and rose again; you are to obey what he commands, in his strength; you are to be ruled by his laws; you are to be disposed of by his providence: you are to give all you have to him; your soul, with all its faculties and powers; your body, with all its members; your understanding, to know him; your will, to choose him; your heart, to love him; your eyes, to read his word, and behold his works; and your lips, to pray to him, to bless him and to praise him. For you are not your own, but bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are God's. Account not your life dear to you, if he call you to witness for him, even to resisting unto blood; but let it be your concern in all things to live to his glory, for you are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you might show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II. We proceed to speak a little of what is imported in these words of the text, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?" And,

1. These words do import, that a call and invitation is directed from God, to you who are the rising generation, to take hold of his covenant of promise: and thus saith the Lord to you, and to every one of you in particular,

"Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" This is a message to you from God; and the word of exhortation speaketh unto you as unto children.

2. They import, that every one of you in particular must personally take hold of the covenant. The faith of your parents will not save you, nor give you an interest in the covenant, unless you yourself believe on the Son of God. "Wilt thou not," in particular, and by name and surname, "cry unto me, My Father?"

3. They import, that God publisheth an indemnity and an act of grace, and is willing to pass by all your former refusals of Christ, whether you are young or old: "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Whatever you have done in former times, behold now, even yet, is the accepted time, the day of salvation! "To day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."

4. They import, that it is most acceptable to God, that you, in particular, take hold of his covenant, and call him Father in Christ's right, in Christ's name, and by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. You may speak it, yea, cry it to God himself; and it will be melody sounding sweetly in the court of heaven, and before a throne of grace: "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?"

5. They import, that the Lord himself answereth all your objections against calling him your Father. There can be no reason against it, but your own unbelief; "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Your father Adam, the head of the first covenant, died, and left you and all his other children fatherless; but the Lord speaketh an encouraging word to you in the new covenant; a call is directed to you who are fatherless, from him in whom the fatherless do find mercy; "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Here he declares, that he is willing to stand in the relation of a Father in Christ unto you, and directs you to claim him by this tender appellation: and though you should object, that your

trespasses are grown up unto the heavens, and your sins are more than the hairs of your head; yet he saith, as in the context, "Though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord. Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?"

6. They import, that the grounds of faith laid down in the word, are stable and solid; so that the chief of sinners, who hear this everlasting gospel, may venture their souls' salvation upon them, with assured confidence. They may not only say it, and whisper it with a soft voice, but they may cry it with a full breath, in the hearing of angels and men, to the glory of God in their salvation, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Faith, when planted in the soul, and drawn forth into exercise, with a sight of its object, is exerted with the greatest freedom, and with the complacency of the whole soul; for, according to the strength of faith, the cry is raised, and doth ring and echo through the whole man, "Thou art my God, the Rock of my salvation." It belongs to faith, where it is, not only to realize its object, but to believe with a particular application to the man himself; so that *my* Father is its native cry.

7. They import, that youth doth need a guide. "Thou art the Guide of my youth." Young men need a guide to teach them how to cleanse their way, Psal. cxix. 9, "By what means shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word." The way of your heart is a polluted way; and you would acknowledge it to be such, if you knew the plague of your own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. Had you a spiritual and humbling discovery of the atheism, self-conceit, self-righteousness, enmity, earthly-mindedness, vanity and blasphemy, with which your hearts are defiled; and did you see that your hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; you would be persuaded that you infinitely need that God, by his word and Spirit, would come and cleanse them. You need to have the way of your worship cleansed,

to be guided of God, to worship him in spirit and in truth; and to have the way of your walk and conversation cleansed, that your corruptions may be mortified, that you may be kept from youthful lusts which war against the soul; and that you may have your "conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Youth is exposed to many temptations, especially in this sinful and corrupt day wherein we live; and you need to have God for the Guide of your youth, that you be not led into temptation, but delivered from all evil. And though you be young, yet your dying-day may be at the door, and a journey just before you, through the dark mountains, through the dark valley and shadow of death. You therefore greatly need to have this God for your God for ever and ever, and to be your Guide even unto death; that he may bring you to that land, where the inhabitant shall not say I am sick, and the people thereof are forgiven their iniquity.

8. They import, that you may have God for the Guide of your youth, and may lay claim to him in that relation; "Wilt thou not" claim him in this character? Nothing doth dishonour him more, nothing doth offend him more, than that you do not in particular, and for yourselves, put in your claim upon him as your Father, and the Guide of your youth. Can you have a better father than God? or can you have a better guide than a father? Your heavenly Father has infinite wisdom, he is a God of infinite power, his love to you is an infinite love; and can you be in safer keeping than just in his hand?

Young man, it is the voice of God to thee, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." The Psalmist said it, and do you, through grace, say it likewise, "O God, thou art my trust from my youth," Psal. lxxi. 4, 5.

Depend on God in Christ, for teaching, Psal. lxxi. 17, "I have been taught by thee from my youth, and hitherto

I have declared thy works." O how refreshing and instructing are the lessons he has taught his people in their youth! By one such lesson you will know more of God, than by hearing and reading all the days of your life: to hear and to read are means of his institution, but they are ineffectual without the teaching of his Spirit. By his teaching, you will be enabled to see, and seeing to declare his wonders; his wonders in the works of nature, in the works of creation and providence; the wonders of his grace, and of his love; the wonders of his mercy and goodness to your souls: "Come, hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

His teaching will be effectual to bring you to Christ, and to preserve you in Christ; for every one that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh to the Son: and it will fit you for bearing his yoke in your youth, his yoke of obedience, and his yoke of suffering, as he sees meet to call you to it. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."

III. We now proceed to offer a few remarks concerning the encouraging promise of grace, to enable you to put in your claim to God, as standing in the relation of a Father in Christ unto you.

1. We remark, that adoption, or the privilege of sonship, is one of the blessings of the new covenant. In the first covenant, Adam was the son of God by creation; but in the new covenant, we become the sons of God by regeneration, by adoption, and by faith in Christ Jesus. The eternal Son of God is become the Son of man, by his incarnation; and through him, as the new-covenant Head, the Head of the redeemed from among men, we have communion with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as our God and Father, in his title and right. And may we not, in a transport of holy wonder, cry out with the apostle, 1 John iii. 1, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" The Spirit of adoption, crying, "Abba

Father," is one of the blessings of this covenant of promise. And it is an article of this new-covenant, that the prodigal son shall see and be convinced of his lost estate in the first covenant; that his first father Adam died, and left his children fatherless; that we all sinned and died in him, as a public person, and are therefore, considered in ourselves, both destitute and without hope in the world, Psal. xlv. 10, "Hearken, O daughter, and incline thine ear; forget thine own people, and thy father's house." Thy father's house, the first Adam's family, is a broken house; there is neither food nor clothing in it, nor any sanctuary in it, to protect perishing sinful souls from the vindictive wrath of God: but in Christ's Father's house there are many mansions, and a table is covered in it, to satiate every weary soul, and to replenish every sorrowful soul.

2. We remark, that there is an almighty efficacy in the grace of God, conveyed to the souls of men, through the promise of the new covenant; "Thou shalt call me, My Father." Though God reveals himself as a Father in Christ, yet not one soul would ever have cried to him, had he not pledged his faithfulness for it in the promise; "Thou shalt call me, My Father." I, who am JEHOVAH, have said it; and what I have said, shall be accomplished: I said it, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," when nothing but darkness covered the face of the deep: I have said it, and therefore the unbelief and enmity of thy heart, and all the snares of the world, and temptations of Satan combined against thy soul, shall not be able to gainsay it: I have said it in a way of promise, and therefore thou shalt say it in a way of faith and believing. Thou shalt say it with the greatest freedom of choice and election, with the truest kind of liberty, and with a jubilee of delight running through thy whole soul.

3. We may remark, that it is only by the Spirit of the Son, and in the right of the Son of God, the first-born from among many brethren, that we can say unto God, "Thou art my Father, thou art the Guide of my youth," Gal. iv. 6.

4. We remark, that it is for the glory of God that we

call him, "My Father," in Christ's name, and in his right and title. God did never put any thing in a promise, but it was for his own honour and glory; and he has promised it, thou shalt call me, "My Father." But perhaps some may say, Is this promise directed to me? and is it for the glory of God, that I in particular call him, "My Father?" Yes, it is. The promise is absolute, without any condition or limitation; it is directed to all who hear this everlasting gospel, and therefore it is directed to you, as well as to others. You have a Bible put into your hands, wherein this word of grace is recorded, and this is a full warrant to you to believe it, and apply it to yourselves. It is a word of grace directed to lost sinners, to those that are fatherless; and you cannot deny that you are one of that sort and kind. It is then the will of God that you call him, "My Father," in the name of Christ; for it is his will, that his promise be believed, and trusted unto. Nothing will please him so well as that you say to him, "My Father," in Christ Jesus; and that you flee into the embraces of his love, through the Son of his love, Matt. iii. 17, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." God is well-pleased with Christ, and with all those that are in Christ; and those who are in Christ are well-pleased with Christ, and they are well-pleased with God, as he is in Christ: for God, as he is in Christ, is a reconciled God, and a merciful Father, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and he "rests in his love."

5. We remark, that we may depend upon the promise of God for grace, to enable us to say to him, "My Father." The promise looketh to you that cannot use these words. Thou shalt be enabled to use them. This is determined on; and he is saying to you, it is not from any good disposition in you, but from grace and love in me; it is not from any power in you, but from my faithfulness in the promise, and from my almighty power to accomplish it, that thou shalt be brought to say, "My Father." Heaven itself, as it were, is wrapt up in this promise, "Thou shalt say, My Father;" that is, thou shalt know me to be JEHOVAH,

to be thy God in Christ; thou shalt know my name as it is in Christ, know my mercy, my love, and grace; thou shalt choose me for thy God and portion; thou shalt trust in me for grace and glory, for the upper and nether springs of heavenly consolation. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, honour and serve me with reverence and godly fear, as thy "Father;" thou shalt be circumcised to love me with all thine heart; thou shalt be enabled to depend upon me for every thing thou dost need, from the shoe's latchet to the great salvation; and thou shalt come to me daily with all thy wants and complaints, as a child to his father, able and ready to help him; for, "thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not depart from me." Yea, thou shalt live and die about my hand: and, waiting thus on the Lord, "thou shalt renew thy strength, and mount up with wings as eagles: thou shalt walk, and not weary, and thou shalt run, and not faint."

IV. We now proceed to make some application of this doctrine, and that in a use of *Examination* and *Exhortation.*

EXAMINATION.

1. Those who have taken hold of God's covenant of promise, have seen themselves to be in a sinful and miserable state, by the breach of the first covenant. You have seen that the variance betwixt God and you is very great, and that the quarrel is running very high: you have been made to approve of, and rely upon God's method of salvation; accounting it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom you are chief. You have renounced all other confidences, and you depend upon the mediation of the Lord Jesus, in all your approaches to God; you have a daily correspondence with him, as appearing in the presence of God for us, coming to him with all your wants to be supplied, with all your plagues to be healed, and with all your sins to be pardoned.

2. They have a deliberate complacency in the covenant of promise. As we show ourselves the children of the first Adam, by our natural bent to the covenant of works; so the believing soul has a liking and relish of the new covenant proposed in the gospel, and saith of it, "It is all my salvation, and all my desire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

3. How do you like the way of holding in this covenant, a holding of grace, and holding upon what Christ has done? Doth the grant and disposition of the new covenant please you well, so that you delight to hold all in the Redeemer's right, and to cry through him, "Thou art my Father, the Rock of my salvation?" How stand you affected to the new-covenant Head? Do you glory in him only? Is. xlv. last. And do you rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh? Phil. iii. 3. Do your hearts sometimes burn with love to an unseen Saviour? And is he to you the "Plant of renown, the Pearl of great price, and more excellent than all the mountains of prey?" Do you look upon yourselves as bankrupt creatures? and are you well-pleased that he has all your stock in his hand, or that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? "They shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, and all the vessels of greater and smaller quantity." The great end and design of the new covenant, which is to glorify God, to honour Christ, and to abase self, is relished with complacency by all the spiritual seed of Abraham; they see grace in it, mercy in it, wisdom and love in it, and heaven dawning in it. There is nothing in this covenant they would have out of it, and there is nothing out of it they would have in it; they rejoice in it, "as well ordered in all things and sure."

4. The righteousness of Christ will be the only ground of your confidence, Phil. iii. 7, 8; you will desire to be found in him, having that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ; and this you will rejoice and glory in, that his name is "The Lord our righteousness." The eternal Son of God, in the covenant, consented to become man, and to be the federal Head and Representative of an elect

world, Is. xlii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 19. The breach between God and man was greater than to be done away by one travelling between parties at variance, to reconcile them with bare words. There could be no covenant of peace betwixt God and sinners, without reparation of damages done to the honour of God through sin, and without honouring the law by an exact obedience; and the Son of God said, "Lo! I come," Psal. xl. 7; I put myself in their room and law-place, as the second Adam, to do both these, in the obedience of my life, and in the sufferings of my death. And let us here adore the condescension of the Son of God in becoming man, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? He who is "over all, God blessed for ever," condescended to be brought into the rank and order of creatures, Rom. ix. 5. He condescended to take unto him an inferior nature, the nature of man, and not the nature of the angels, Heb. ii. 16. He assumed the human nature after it was blasted by sin, and withered with the curse; for he took on him "the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3; so that, though he was not a sinner, yet he looked like one. By this assumption, his Deity was vailed, and his glory eclipsed, Phil. ii. 6, 7; for he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, that he might glorify God upon the earth, and that in his righteousness we might be exalted.

Thus did the eternal Son of God condescend to be the Representative of an elect world, to transact in their name, Is. xlii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 47. The holy One of God represented wretched sinners; the Beloved of the Father represented the sinful company. Hence the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to his people in its effects only, (which is no proper imputation at all,) so as their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are therefore accepted, as their evangelical righteousness, on which they are justified; but Christ's righteousness is imputed to them in itself, even as Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity; for Christ obeyed and suffered as a public person, in the room and law-stead of his people; even as

Adam sinned as a public person, and his posterity sinned in him, and fell with him, Rom. v. 12, 19. and viii. 3; so that the covenant of grace is absolute, and not conditional to us; for, it being made with Christ as Representative, the condition of it was laid upon him, and fulfilled by him, in his everlasting righteousness.

EXHORTATION.

We now proceed to a use of Exhortation; and would solemnly exhort you, whether young or old, in the name of the eternal God, and in the name of his Son Christ Jesus our Lord, that you, and every one of you who shall read these lines, do personally, and for yourselves, embrace and take hold of God's covenant of promise. Take hold of it as left to you: for there is a promise left you of entering into God's rest; and beware lest you come short of it, Heb. iv. 1. It is given to you and to your children, to be believed and trusted to, and applied by you, Acts ii. 39, 40; and this will be your condemnation, if you reject the counsel of God against your own souls.

When the soul gets a saving discovery of God, as he is in Christ, it is not one blessing that attends it, but a multitude of blessings, even all the sure mercies of David. "Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace with him, and thereby good shall come unto thee." You cannot know God until you see him in Christ; since he is in Christ, you may now, without delay, acquaint yourself with him: and if once you are acquainted with God, and know him as he is in Christ, you cannot but be at peace with him; for there you will see him as he is, "reconciling the world unto himself." You will see him to be love, 1 John iv. 10; seeing him to be love, you will love him, who first loved you; and, loving him, you will be at peace with him, who is "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant." The very first sight you see of God, as he is in Christ, will draw

your heart unto him with cords of love; and that day will be the day-spring from on high to your soul; the day of your espousals unto Christ, and of your conversion unto God. This will be the day of God's working in your heart the work of faith with power, and of his betrothing you unto himself for ever, in faithfulness, and in righteousness, in loving-kindness, and in tender mercies.

If the question be moved, What is it to take hold of the covenant of promise? We answer, That the way to take hold of the covenant, or the way to enter personally into the covenant of grace, is to give yourselves up to Christ the new-covenant Head by faith. This is the way, and may a day of the Mediator's power accompany any small endeavours that are made, to speak of the mystery of faith, in the believing application of the promise of God's covenant! It will be matter of the most mournful lamentation, if the ark of the covenant be opened unto you in the gospel, and not one shelterless soul of Adam's family flee into it for refuge.

It is only under the influence of the Holy Spirit that you can personally come into the covenant, Is. xliv. 5. and xlv. 24; and you come personally into it, by the following steps: 1. Through the grace of the Divine Spirit, you are convinced of sin, or made to see and believe that you are lost, ruined, and undone in Adam, by his breaking the first covenant, as a federal head and a public person, Rom. v. 12, 19. 1 Cor. xv. 22. 2. That by nature you are wholly corrupted, averse to good, and prone to evil, Gen. vi. 5. 3. That you are under the curse of the broken law, and bound over to the avenging wrath of God, Gal. iii. 10. 4. That you are utterly unable to help yourselves out of this gulf of sin and misery into which you are plunged, Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6. 5. You are made to believe, that there is a covenant of grace, for the relief of lost sinners, established between God essentially considered, and the Lord Jesus, as the Head of the redeemed from among men; or, between the Father, as representing the Deity, and his eternal Son, as the second Adam, wherein the Lord Jesus

undertook to fulfil all righteousness as a public person, and the Father contracted to bestow all blessings upon that account; and that this covenant of grace is a free and an absolute covenant, and not conditional as to you; for, the covenant being made with Christ as Representative, the conditions of the covenant were laid upon him, and fulfilled by him, in and by his holy birth, his righteous life, and satisfactory death, Psal. lxxxix. throughout. 6. You are made to believe, that the covenant of grace, fulfilled in the condition of it by Christ its Head, and certainly to be fulfilled in its promise, is, in Christ crucified, really offered to you in particular in the gospel; and that you are called to the fellowship of it in him: for, "To you is the word of this salvation sent;" and, "The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. 39. and xiii. 26. 7. You are made to believe on the name of Christ crucified, offered and exhibited to you in particular, as the Lord our righteousness, as the great High Priest of our profession, who was ordained for men, who made reconciliation for the sins of the people, and who is now to men the end of the law for righteousness. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in his name, shall receive the remission of sins." 8. You are made so to believe in him as to devote yourselves unto him, and worship him, as the King of Zion, and Governor among the nations. Hearken unto him as your Prophet; and, in his strength, resign yourselves in soul and body, and all you have, unto him, to be taught by his word and Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence; to be his disciples, his servants, his followers, Is. xliv. 4, 5; renouncing, through his grace, all other lords and lovers, Hos. xiv. 4, 5, 8; and relying on him, to be rescued from sin and Satan, from the present evil world, from death, hell, and the grave. You may trust in him, as King in Zion for sanctification; for he is a heart-conquering and a sin-subduing Lord: "He will subdue our iniquities, and will cast all our sins into the depths

of the sea," Mic. vii. 19. 9. Through Christ, believe in God, as your God and Father, in his title and right; and depend upon the Holy Ghost, as your Sanctifier, Comforter, Teacher, and Remembrancer, 1 Cor. vi. 19. John xiv. 26. and xv. 26, 27.

"To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The word of exhortation speaketh unto you as unto children; "My son, give me thy heart." Let no one think that he is shut out. "The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people," Is. lvi. 6, 7.

(1.) Consider, that it has been the practice of all the saints, in all ages, to come personally into the bond of the covenant. Thomas saith, "Thou art my Lord, and my God;" and the church doth put in her claim to the covenant-relation, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him," Lam. iii. 24. See also Psal. xvi. 2. and lxxiii. 25, 27. (2.) Consider it is a business no other person can do for you; if, by grace, you do not personally come into the bond of the covenant for yourselves, you cannot come at all. The parent cannot come for the child, nor the husband for the wife, Jer. ix. 25. Matt. viii. 11, 12. Amos ix. 7. (3.) The call to come into the bond of the covenant is personal, directed to every man who hears the gospel; "Unto you I call, O men," Prov. viii. 4; and the answer of faith to the call must therefore be personal; "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Psal. xxvii. 8. Is. xlv. 23. and xliv. 4. (4.) Consider, this is the season of coming personally into the bond of the covenant; it is the season of youth with some of you, and "it is good to bear Christ's

yoke in your youth." The Lord appeared to Solomon, at Gibeon, in his youth; and Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth. It is the voice of the Son of God to you, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early, shall find me," Prov. viii. 17. It is a time of backsliding and defection with us all; for we have forsaken the Lord God of our fathers; and therefore it is a season wherein we ought to say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now:" and it is encouraging for us to think that the Lord, the God of Israel, hateth putting away. It is withal a time of threatened judgments, and therefore a proper season for taking hold of God's covenant; for when the decree bringeth forth, and the day of the Lord's controversy approacheth, there will be no safety but in the ark of the covenant.

As for directions, I shall only say, 1. That you are to take hold of the covenant of promise, in an humble and confident dependence upon the grace and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, without whom you can do nothing; depending upon a promising God, and upon the Holy Spirit of promise, Is. xliv. 5. and xlv. 24. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. John xv. 4, 5. and i. 16. 2. You are to take hold of it cordially; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" and Psal. xvi. 2. the Psalmist saith, "O my soul, thou hast said unto JEHOVAH, Thou art my Lord." 3. You are to take hold of the covenant with judgment and solid consideration, and not by a mere flash of affection, Hos. ii. 19, "I will betroth thee unto me in judgment." 4. You are to take hold of the covenant speedily, and without delay; for the Master is come, and calleth for you; and blessed are you who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. It is the voice of God to you this very day; "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. Though you find not that enlargement which you would wish to attain unto; yet, if your doubting and averseness be your burden, as they are your sin, do you essay and endeavour to say it in the strength of grace, though it should be with stammer-

ing lips, "The Lord is my God." This was Jacob's language at Bethel, in the day of his youth, and in the day of his distress, when he fled from the face of Esau his brother, "The Lord shall be my God."

I shall conclude with recommending it to you, to meditate frequently upon the love of Christ, and upon the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem.

1. Meditate frequently upon the love of Christ as betrothing love. God, in the new covenant, has revealed himself as a betrothing God. The Son of God has betrothed and married our nature to himself in a personal union, and we may therefore, with confidence, venture upon his grace and good-will toward men. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised to betroth sinners of Adam's house to himself in a way of free and sovereign grace, Hos. ii. 19, 20, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The great God in our nature Christ has taken his betrothing love, and wrapped it up in a covenant of promise; and indorsed the promise to sinners, that the sinful sons of men may trust it, and that all may feel they have a warrant to claim it for salvation.

The persons betrothed are sinners of Adam's house; the glorious infinite person betrothing, is the great God our Saviour: and it is a most blessed union which is thus formed betwixt sinners and a Saviour; betwixt dead sinners, and him who is the resurrection and the life; betwixt blind benighted souls, and him who is the light of the world; betwixt diseased, polluted sinners, and him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; betwixt guilty sinners, and him who is JEHOVAH our righteousness, in whom God is to be found, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. Hearken therefore, and consider it, ye children of men; forget your father's house, the house of the first Adam; and forego all hold of the first covenant, (for that

covenant being broken, the whole family is undone and ruined,) and be espoused to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the redeemed from among men; "So shall the King greatly desire your beauty," Psal. xlv. 10.

Consider the attractions of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is fairer than the sons of men; he is altogether lovely, Psal. xlv. 1. Song v. 10, 16; his riches are unsearchable riches of grace and of glory, Eph. iii. 8. Consider his dying love, that he was slain, that he might redeem you to God by his blood, that he might redeem you from this present evil world, and redeem you from all iniquity, Rev. v. 9. Gal. i. 3, 4. Tit. ii. 14. He is the Judge of the quick and the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the first-begotten of the dead, who took upon him your dying clay that he might give you a glorious immortality; for when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye shall also appear with him in glory.

2. Meditate frequently upon the glorious decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem, Luke ix. 30, 31, "And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

It is necessary, in your meditating upon such a theme, that you be under the influence of the Spirit of glory. Moses and Elias appeared in glory, and talked of his decease; they had a noon-tide of the light of glory, of the Spirit of glory, upon them: and unless a twilight-glimpse of that glory beam into your hearts, you will neither think nor talk to purpose of a subject so stupendous. It is a subject so sublime as to be spoken of for ever by saints and angels. There will be use of speech in heaven; there will be a voice of tongues about the throne; and their talk will be of the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem.

His decease was his death, his exit or departure. The departure of Israel out of Egypt to Canaan, is called their *Exit* or *Exodus*, the same word which is used here: and his decease was like their departure, accompanied by a

bloody attack upon him by all the hosts of hell. He went through a Red-sea of suffering, and of vindictive wrath, making peace by the blood of his cross. His decease was the subject of discourse upon mount Tabor; a subject that was most delightful to our Lord himself, and most refreshing to Moses and Elias: though they had come down from the place of heaven, yet their bliss, their beatitude was not impaired; for they had the presence of Christ; and, appearing in glory, they talked of his decease, which was at once the great theme of the inhabitants of the upper house, and the fountain and spring of all their felicity. The highest style of language in heaven, is devoted to the decease our Lord accomplished at Jerusalem. We have no nice elaborate discourse that Moses and Elias made upon the mount: no; it was, in a few words, massy, lofty, and sublime, "The decease he should accomplish at Jerusalem!" It was the burden of the song of the redeemed; they brought this highest note down with them to the earth: for when angels and saints about the throne have enlarged their thoughts and contemplations, and bended their faculties to the uttermost, and soared as high as their heads can carry them, they are just obliged to issue their song where they began: "O how great, ineffable, and divine, is that mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, accomplishing his decease at Jerusalem!" The glory of heaven just centres in the death he accomplished at Jerusalem: we do not hear a word about Moses and Elias, when they appeared in glory upon mount Tabor, except that they talked of the "decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem!"

You are to meditate upon the glory of the person of Christ, who accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. He is Lord of all, the Lord of glory: "If the princes of this world had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Prince of life; "But ye killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead," Acts iii. 15. He is the King of glory, "the God of glory, who appeared to Abraham

when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." He is JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who spake to Moses, Exod. iii. from the burning-bush at Horeb. He is, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father," Is. ix. 6; and yet his name is called JESUS, because "he saveth his people from their sins."

You are to mediate upon the grounds and reasons of the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem. It was for the glory of God in man's salvation, John xvii. 3, 4. It was for the glory of the holiness, majesty, and justice of God; of the grace, mercy, and love of God: it was to "finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and to make reconciliation for iniquity;" that, in this way, God might be glorified in man's salvation.

You are to meditate upon the nature and quality of the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem. He accomplished it in a public capacity; he took our nature into an intimate and personal union with himself, 1 Tim. iii. 16. John i. 14; he substituted himself in our room and law-place; and so he suffered "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, giving his life a ransom for many." This decease was early promised, Gen. iii. 15; it was testified of by all the prophets, it was expected and looked for by all the Old-Testament saints; it was seen by them afar off. In his decease he did bear our griefs, our sins, our shame, and our sorrows. It was an ignominious and a cursed death, and yet a triumphant and a victorious death; for he "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly on the cross, triumphing over them in it." In addition to all this, it was a necessary death; "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Yet more, it was an acceptable, a savoury death; "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 2.

You are to meditate upon the pleasant fruits and effects

of the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem. He has reconciled us to God by his death, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. The Lamb slain has opened the seven seals; he has opened the gates of paradise, the fountain of life, and the treasures of grace; he has opened up and revealed the counsels and purposes of God's love that were hid in a mystery; and he has opened the understandings of men, to see the wonders of his grace, mercy and love, in the covenant of promise. To do all this he was worthy, for he was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood; he hath glorified God upon the earth, and finished the work he gave him to do; "he said, It is finished, and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." It was the purpose of the wisdom and love of God, to gather his greatest revenue of glory from the salvation of sinners of Adam's family, that deserved to be in hell; and what a wonderful theme of meditation is it, that the cross and death of Jesus Christ, should be the great mean of the glory of God in man's salvation! The most wonderful sight in heaven is, "The Lamb in the midst of the throne, as if he had been slain;" and the greatest homage and worship God ever received, was in Golgotha, when Christ, though a Son, humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross!

Yet again, you are to meditate upon that holy joy, that willingness and cheerfulness, with which he accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. This was the subject with which he entertained Moses and Elias in mount Tabor. He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men. He said, "Lo, I come, a body hast thou prepared me;" that is, a human nature, to obey in, to suffer, and to die in, for the remission of the sins of many. He spake of his decease all along; he preached it to Nicodemus, John iii. 14; he went to Jerusalem, with holy resolution, at the last passover; "he went all the way journeying to Jerusalem;" he was the first in the company; he went to his decease, as to a triumph, ac-

companied by the hosannas of the multitude: he longed for the last passover; "with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer:" and he longed for his bloody baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He went singing to his work of suffering; "he did sing an hymn, and went out to the mount of Olives." But what shall we say? for time would fail, and eternity itself will be too short, to speak of his glory, and of the wonders of his dying love, who accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. "Lo, these are parts of his ways; and how small a part of him is known or heard?" What can we think? or, what can we say? but that our thoughts are swallowed up, and that expression doth fail us, while we contemplate the infinite evil of sin, the inexorable justice of God, and his infinite holiness, as all seen so clearly in him, who was crucified on Calvary. Let us for ever adore the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge: hoping through grace, to spend eternity, in beholding the Lamb, "in the midst of the throne." There may we all be found at last, wondering and praising with Moses and Elias, the prophets and apostles, and martyrs of Jesus, and talking with them "of the decease he accomplished at Jerusalem! So shall we be ever with the Lord."

MEMORIALS

OF THE

REV. JAMES FISHER,

MINISTER OF THE ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION IN GLASGOW, PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY TO THE ASSOCIATE (BURGHER) SYNOD, AND ONE OF THE FOUR LEADERS OF THE SECESSION FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

IN A NARRATIVE OF HIS LIFE

BY JOHN BROWN, D.D.,

SENIOR MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BROUGHTON-PLACE, EDINBURGH, AND PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY TO THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;

AND A SELECTION FROM HIS WRITINGS.

"In writing of lives all big words are to be left to those who dress up legends, and *make* lives rather than *write* them: the things themselves must praise the person, otherwise all the good words that the writer bestows on him will only show his own great kindness to his memory, but will not persuade others: on the contrary, it will incline them to suspect his partiality, and make them look on him as an *author* rather than a *writer*."—BURNET.

PREFACE.

The following Memoir is the first attempt to give a detailed account of the life and character of Mr. Fisher; and, made at the distance of three quarters of a century from his death, it is necessarily meagre and in many respects imperfect. The writer cannot accuse himself of want of interest in his work, or of diligence in endeavouring to procure materials for executing it; and he gratefully acknowledges the readiness with which his inquiries have been met in every quarter in which they have been made. The defects of the narrative must be traced either to scantiness of information, which in the circumstances is no way wonderful, or to unskilfulness in making use of it—of which none can be more sensible than the compiler himself. The courteous reader, while he must regret the former, will, it is hoped, forgive the latter.

Dr. Fraser's most judicious and interesting biographical works in reference to the Erskine Brothers, and Dr. MacKerrow's elaborate and most trustworthy History of the Secession have been habitually consulted during the composition of the sketch, and the great advantage derived from them is gratefully acknowledged. In almost every case, however, the original documents which were before them have been anew examined. The compiler finds himself under peculiar obligations to his old and esteemed fellow-student and friend, the Rev. William Fraser of Alloa, for not only laying open to him the whole of his venerated brother's MS. collections in reference to Mr. Fisher, but at the expense of much labour furnishing transcripts of many valuable documents from these short-hand collections.—His best thanks also are due to the Very Rev. Principal Lee of the University of Edinburgh, — the Rev. Dr. Reid, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Glasgow, — the Rev. Dr. Buist, Professor of Theology in the University of St. Andrews, — the Rev. Dr. Young of Perth, — the Rev. Dr. M'Kelvie of Balgedie,—the Rev. Dr. Auld, Ayr,—the Rev. Mr. Touch, Kinnoul, — the Rev. Mr. Nelson, Auchtergaven, — the Rev. Mr. Henderson, Kinclaven,—the Rev Mr. Young of Kinclaven,—the Rev. John Kidd, St. Andrews,—the Rev. James Knox, Ayr,—and the Rev. William Bayne, Auchtergaven. The Rev. George Jeffrey gave him the necessary information from

the Minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow; David Anderson, Esq., submitted to his inspection the Minutes of the Session of the Associate Congregation, Glasgow, from its constitution in 1740 till Mr. Fisher's death in 1775; and his esteemed relatives, Mr. Fisher's descendants, readily placed at his disposal such documents as were in their possession.

It was at one time the writer's wish that a whole volume of this series should be occupied by Mr. Fisher's life and writings: but though abundance of materials, probably fit enough for publication, lies in Mr. Fisher's short-hand MS., there would be considerable difficulty in deciphering these; and the only MSS. in long-hand, fit for the press,—two action sermons on Rev. xix. 9. and Psal. lxxx. 17. and a Synod sermon on Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.—would, along with his published sermons, have made a disproportionably thin volume. It has been resolved therefore to confine Mr. Fisher's writings to the sermons published under his own superintendence, and to connect his life and writings with those of his fellow-labourer Mr. Moncrieff.

There is a peculiar propriety in such a connection. Moncrieff and Fisher were early friends and zealous co-operators in a common cause—the cause of truth and freedom. They indeed differed, and "the contention was so sharp that they parted asunder one from the other." They have long ago been reconciled and reunited. The suspicion has often been thrown out, even in print,* though without any evidence for the revolting statement, that "THE BREACH" was in some good measure to be traced to private pique between these two good men. If it was so, there was "grievous fault" somewhere; but that would but afford an additional reason, why they, who side by side in heaven, have for near a century been singing together "the new song" in which there are no discords, should in this little book go down to posterity side by side, teaching Christian truth in their writings and Christian holiness by their example. "Nunc in sinu Veritatis, sese complectuntur, ubi nullæ lites, nulla dissensio, sed sola regnat eternum charitas."

J. B.

BUSBY, *May 25th*, 1849.

* Struthers' History of Scotland since the Union, vol. ii., p. 552.

TO THE

SURVIVING GRANDCHILDREN

OF

THE REV. JAMES FISHER:

MRS. JANE CRUM, THORNLIEBANK,

HUMPHRY EWING MACLAE, ESQUIRE OF CATHKIN,

MRS. MARGARET BUCHAN, BRAESIDE, WEST CANADA,

JAMES EWING, ESQUIRE OF STRATHLEVEN,

MRS. ELIZABETH HYDE, DUNOON,

AND RALPH WARDLAW, D.D., SS.T.P., GLASGOW;

AND TO HIS OTHER DESCENDANTS,

THESE MEMORIALS ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR KINSMAN,

THE COMPILER.

1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Psalm ciii. 17, 18.

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MEMORIALS

OF THE

REV. JAMES FISHER.

Narrative of his Life.

CHAPTER I.

1697—1722.

Parentage—The Rev. Thomas Fisher—Minister of Barr—Auchtergaven—Rhynd—His death—His family—Birth of his son James—Education—License.

James Fisher, the youngest of the four "Associate Brethren" who were honoured to be the leaders in that Secession from the Established Church of Scotland, which has already, directly and indirectly, produced effects so important and beneficial, and the influence of which is likely to reach to distant countries and coming generations, was the son of the Rev. Thomas Fisher and Mrs. Susanna Menzies his spouse.

Mr. Thomas Fisher was minister successively of Barr, an extensive moorland parish in the south of Ayrshire bordering on Galloway, and of Auchtergaven, and Rhynd, in the county of Perth. We have not the means of ascertaining the parentage of Mr. Thomas Fisher, nor even the district of Scotland of which he was a native. He probably was the first minister of Barr after the revolution settlement, and not an Ayrshire man by birth. In April 1692 the parish of Barr applied to the Presbytery of Ayr, requesting that they would be pleased "to desire Mr. Thomas Fisher Ex-

pectant," then a married man, for his marriage took place Nov. 16th, 1691, "who in providence was within the bounds, to come and preach to them." The Presbytery "having seen his testimonials, complied with their request—and desired Mr. F. to preach to them as oft as he could, betwixt and the next meeting of Presbytery, and then to preach before themselves." The result was, that the parishioners of Barr, in May 1692, signified to the Presbytery that they had a subscribed call ready to give Mr. F.; and though he discovered an unwillingness to accept of it, the Presbytery prescribed him trials for ordination. With difficulty, Mr. F.'s objections to settle at Barr were got the better of, and his ordination took place on the 9th of May, 1693, Mr. Matthew Baird presiding and preaching on 2 Cor. v. 20. He appears to have experienced difficulties of various kinds here; and at last, on the 7th Jan., 1697, he "gave in a supplication to the Presbytery desiring an act of transportability* from the parish of Barr, by reason he finds himself prejudiced in health from the air of that place, so that he is not able to exercise his ministerial work, which is uneasy to his mind." The Presbytery, after due examination, and conference both with the minister and people, and having got the statement of physicians "to show how much they judge that the air where he liveth is hurtful to him," on the 4th March, agreed, *nem. con.*, to grant his supplication.† A call was given him by the parish of Auchtergaven in April 1698, and commissioners appointed by the Presbytery of Perth to "agent his transportation with the Presbytery of Ayr." In this they of course found no difficulty, and on April 26th, 1698, he was admitted by the Presbytery of Perth to the charge of the parish of Auchtergaven.

* Vide Pardovan, book i. tit. iii.
† Minutes of the Presbytery of Ayr.

In some points of view the change must have been an agreeable one,—from a bleak and thinly inhabited region to the fertile and populous and romantic banks of the Tay,—and probably too from a very limited to a somewhat more competent income. But it seems to have had its drawbacks. In Barr Mr. Fisher, whatever difficulties he had to contend with, had to minister to a people deeply interested in, and firmly attached to, the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian church, for which many of their fathers had laid down their lives, and not a few of themselves had been personal sufferers.* In removing to Auchtergaven, he went to a region where the body of the great landholders were Jacobites in their politics and Prelatists in their religion, and where the principles of the Covenant had never taken such extensive and deep root as in the south-west of the island.

The result of this state of things appeared in Mr. Fisher being constrained, in the course of little more than a year, to bring his "Grievances" under the consideration of the Presbytery. To his statement of grievances the Parishioners gave answers, — but on being called to give rejoinders to his replies, they "compeared not—neither sent any excuse." The Presbytery were about, according to the practice of the time, to "grant Mr. Fisher an act of transportability," but finding that a call had come forth for him from the parish of Rhynd, they agreed to translate him. His admission took place on the 6th of October, 1699, under very favourable auspices; "the brethren of said paroch and elders thereof present, in token of their hearty concurrence and consent to the action, took their minister by the hand."† In this delightful little

* In the list of proclaimed fugitives, 1684, in Wodrow, there are ten persons from the parish of Barr.

† Minutes of the Presbytery of Perth.

parish on the banks of the Tay and the Earn, in the immediate neighbourhood of "the Fair City," Mr. Fisher laboured for more than twenty years. In the Minutes of the Presbytery of Perth of date 26th April, 1721, there is this entry: "The reverend and worthy Mr. Thomas Fisher, minister of the gospel at Rhind, died upon the 24th day of March last."*

Mr. Fisher had a family of eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. Six of these died in infancy. Two daughters reached maturity, a third dying in early youth. The only one of his sons who survived him was the subject of this narrative. Another son, whose name was Samuel, died in the same year with his father at the early age of 17.

James, who was the third child of his parents, was born at Barr on the 23d January, 1697, and was under three years of age when his father settled at Rhynd. From the immediate vicinity of Perth, it is all but certain that he received the elements of his classical education—a more thorough one than could have been obtained at many of the parish schools at that period—at the grammar school of that city. That was not the only advantage which he derived from his local position. From the town of Perth being immediately adjoining, much intercourse was likely to take place between the families of the ministers, men of kindred sentiments; and it is probable that he there first met with Ebenezer Erskine, with whom in after life he was to become so closely connected by a variety of bands. His vicinity to Abernethy too, likely led to an early intimacy with the young laird of Culfargie, who was nearly of his own age, and had devoted himself to the service of God in the gospel of his Son, and

* There was an attempt made, which all but succeeded, to obtain as his successor Mr. Wilson of Perth, who was about this time and afterwards made very unhappy by the waywardness of a colleague.

with whom he was to be so closely associated in the most important events of his future life.

His literary and philosophical education seems to have been very complete. He commenced his curriculum in Glasgow in the Session 1712-13, under the care of Professor Alexander Dunlop, a distinguished Greek scholar, and author of the Greek Grammar long taught in the Scottish Universities; and finished it in St. Andrews in the Session 1715-16. He entered the Divinity Hall in the University of Edinburgh, then superintended by Mr. William Hamilton, in November 1716, and continued under his care for six Sessions.* Among his fellow-students of the same year is to be found the name of Edmund Calamy, the son of the "honest chronicler" of nonconformist learning, worth, and suffering.

On the death of his father in 1721, his mother removed with her family, consisting then of her son JAMES and three daughters, from the manse of Rhynd to Balcanquhal in the parish of Arngask, a mansion-house belonging to the Balcanquhals of that ilk, who rented it to Mrs. Fisher. The Marrow Controversy at this time was agitating the church. Mr. Fisher had been led to adopt the views of the defenders of what were called the Marrow doctrines,† and instead of attending the ministry of the incumbent of Arngask, who was hostile to these views, observed ordinances at Portmoak, the distinguished minister of which was one of their most enlightened and fearless champions. The acquaintance which he probably had previously with Mr. Erskine then became more intimate. He was a frequent visitor at the manse, and the foundation was thus laid of an attachment, which, as we shall by and by see, led to the

* MS. note-book of Professor Hamilton, in the hands of the Rev. Principal Lee.

† Vide Appendix, No. I.

formation of a close relationship with the minister's family.*

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Perth, 7th March, 1722, it was "represented that Mr. James Fisher, son to the late Rev. Mr. Thomas Fisher, has attended the profession this six years bygone; and having had a savoury account of him, from many of the brethren that knew him, it was agreed that he be wrote to in Edinburgh, to wait on the Presbytery this day 20 days that they may commune with him anent entering on trials." On the 29th of March, "the brethren communed with him, and were very well satisfied," and steps were taken to make the ordinary report to the Synod. On the 11th April, "a testificate from the Rev. William Hamilton, Professor of Divinity, Edinburgh, in Mr. Fisher's favour, was produced and sustained," and his trials for license were entered on. On the 21st of October, 1722, he was licensed to preach the gospel, and immediately employed for some time in supplying pulpits within the bounds of the Presbytery.†

* Information furnished by Dr. M'Kelvie.
† Minutes of the Presbytery of Perth.

CHAPTER II.

1722—1740.

Call to Glenisla—Ordination at Kinclaven—Questions for Elders—Marriage—Mrs. Fisher—Public spirit—Representation to the Assembly 1732—Rejected—Ebenezer Erskine's Sermon at Kinclaven—and Perth—Mr. Fisher's protest and complaint against the decision of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, Oct. 1732—His appearance at the Assembly, 1733—Suspended by the Commission, Aug. 1733—Separated from his charge by the Commission, Nov. 1733—Chosen Clerk of the Associate Presbytery at its constitution, Dec. 6, 1733—Remarkable act of Assembly, 1734—Reponed by the Synod of Perth and Stirling, July 1734—Formal accession of the Session of Kinclaven to the Associate Presbytery—Communions at Kinclaven—Libelled by the Commission, Nov. 1738—Deposed by the Assembly, 1740.

The term of Mr. Fisher's probationership was not of long duration. He appears speedily to have acquired the reputation of a useful and acceptable preacher,—a reputation which, being solidly founded, lasted for life. His first call was to the parish of Glenisla, in Forfarshire, and he had delivered part of his trials for ordination there, when an unanimous call from the vacant parish of Kinclaven, where the right of planting the parish had fallen out of the Patron's into the Presbytery's hand, was brought out for him. The Presbytery of Dunkeld having received a communication from the Presbytery of Meigle, giving a very favourable account of Mr. Fisher's conduct when in their bounds, certifying that both his license and testimonials had been produced before them, and farther that the parts of trials delivered before them had been approved, sustained the call from Kinclaven to Mr. Fisher, concurred with it, sustained the pieces of trial delivered before the Pres-

bytery of Meigle, and appointed the other trials required by the laws of the church.—These trials were delivered by him on the 7th of December, 1725—a lecture on Ps. cxxi. and a popular sermon on Ps. cxxi. 2. He sustained his thesis "de deitate Filii," explained the 19th Psalm in Hebrew, read the Greek Testament "ad aperturam libri," answered his catechetics and chronological questions on the last half of the 10th century, and was approved. The call of the parish was put into his hand, and the Presbytery agreed "tanquam jure devoluto" to give him their "call" to supply the legal place of the presentation; and arrangements were made for the ordination.

His ordination at Kinclaven, accordingly, took place on the 23d of December, 1725. The Rev. Mr. Bowis presided, and preached from 2 Tim. iv. 5. "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, give full proof of thy ministry." "The questions appointed by acts of Assembly were proposed to him in face of the congregation, and he having answered them, and declared his willingness to take charge of that congregation, and they having declared their willingness to have him to be their minister, by lifting up their hands as well as by their call formerly given, he was, by solemn prayer and imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, ordained, and the Moderator and brethren gave him the right hand of fellowship."* We have been thus minute, to show that Mr. Fisher, like the rest of the Associate Brethren, had from the beginning been a consistent advocate for the rights of the Christian people, and came into court with clean hands. It has been said that the words of the text of his ordination sermon seem to have been "in his heart, bound for a sign on his hand, and as frontlets between his eyes." He commenced his ministry on the following Lord's day by

* Minutes of the Presbytery of Dunkeld.

preaching from Rom. xv. 30—32. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe,—that my service may be accepted of the saints,—that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may by you be refreshed."—He appears to have entered on his work with a determination to "make full proof of his ministry," and he did so. After a lapse of more than a hundred and twenty years, the patriarchs of the district bear testimony that their fathers were accustomed to tell them how well prepared Mr. Fisher was always for the pulpit, and how faithful in his private visitations.*

* Like the other Fathers of the Secession, Mr. Fisher seems to have been through life very attentive to his pulpit preparations. No press of public business appears to have been allowed to interfere with that. His beautifully written note books prove this. Things cannot long continue in a healthy state in a religious body where preparation for the pulpit is made a secondary object.—"Ministers are not set apart to their office to trifle away six days of the week, and then to go to the pulpit with whatever comes uppermost. Such extemporary performances, though for a little they may please some, seldom do credit to God's ordinances, or produce any lasting effects on the hearers."* It was the practice at the Presbyterial examinations to require the minister to produce his note book, to show that he preached catechetical doctrine, and was regular and careful in preparation for the pulpit. A revival of the practice, gone into desuetude, might perhaps be useful in some quarters. Mr. Fisher seems to have been fond of apothegms and pointed sayings. A number of these, according to a practice not uncommon among the ministers of that time, are found on the inside of the boards of his note books. We give a specimen or two.

Si sapiens fore vis, sex serva quæ tibi mando:
Quid loqueris, ad quem, de quo, cur, quomodo, quando.

Si tua pertingat, penetretque, Precatio cœlum,
Corde sit ex puro, sit brevis atque frequens.

Quisquis amat, dictis, absentium rodere famam
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.

* Dr. John Erskine.

It is a proof of the just judgment he had formed of the vital importance of a godly active eldership to the well-being of a Christian church, and of the interest he took in the progress of true religion among his people, that not many months after his ordination he laid the following questions before the Session to be proposed to its members individually at regular periods. "1. Do you worship God in your families, morning and evening? 2. Do you visit the sick in your quarters and pray with them? 3. Do you take notice of the families in your quarter if they maintain and keep up the worship of God? 4. Is there any scandal in your quarter? 5. Do you exhort parents to put their children to school? 6. Do you exhort and admonish persons in private before you delate them before the session, according to Christ's command and direction? 7. Do you instruct your children and families in the knowledge of the principles of religion? 8. Do you notice such persons and families as are in worldly straits? 9. Are you faithful in admitting and debarring, when the roll of the congregation is read before the Session?"*

Mr. Fisher's diligent ministrations were so acceptable that not long after his ordination the church was found incapable of accommodating the congregation. To meet this exigency a gallery was erected. On its completion, "the Session taking into consideration that the loft in the church was now finished, resolved to let it out for the use of the poor of this parish, and that the yearly rent which each person shall pay shall be two shillings and sixpence Scots," *i. e.*, twopence halfpenny in our money.†

In the year 1727 an event occurred which, to a very great degree, gave colour to Mr. Fisher's future life, and was, under God, the source of much of his useful-

* Session records of the parish of Kinclaven. † Ibid.

ness and happiness. We refer to his union in marriage with Miss Jean Erskine, eldest daughter of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, then of Portmoak, afterwards of Stirling. This event took place at Portmoak on the 4th July, that year. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. Ralph Erskine, the bride being his favourite niece, and the bridegroom a very highly esteemed young friend and brother. Miss Erskine proved indeed "a help meet" for her husband, and in receiving her "he obtained favour of the Lord." Her piety, cheerfulness, prudence, and good temper made her quite a pattern minister's wife. She relieved him of, what he was ill fitted to bear, the burden of secular affairs, and "his heart safely trusted in her."—It is delightful to see the sacred fire of conjugal affection burning brightly after the lapse of nearly half a century of no ordinary trial, and diffusing so sweet a radiance over the evening of life.—But Mrs. Fisher's character deserves more attention than can be given it here without interfering with the course of the narrative, and shall form the subject of a brief notice in the Appendix. *

While occupying the most of his time in the discharge of his ministerial duties, Mr. Fisher early proved that he was possessed of that true public spirit which cannot allow a man to rest when he sees the great interests of his country and of the church of Christ in danger. He was one of the men who "cared not only for his own things" but for "the things of Christ,"—"the things of others." He had witnessed with deep regret and inward indignation equally the invasions of the civil power, after the Union, on the ecclesiastical liberties of Scotland, and the tame submission of the ecclesiastical courts and the great body of the clergy to these usurpations; and he had observed with, if

* Vide Appendix, No. II.

possible, deeper sorrow, the indications of a growing carelessness in the church courts about purity of doctrine, and a growing disposition to tamper with and disregard the most sacred rights of the members of the church—the Christian people as they were then termed. So early as the year 1731, while yet a very young minister, we find him meeting with the Rev. William Wilson of Perth, George Gillespie of Strathmiglo, Robert Laing of Newburgh, Laurence M'Intosh of Errol, and Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy, to consider what measures it might be advisable and right to adopt in reference to that crisis of ecclesiastical affairs, which, to all who could discern the signs of the times, was seen to be rapidly approaching.*

The result of this meeting was the drawing up a representation to be presented to the next General Assembly, May 1732, to which, besides their own signatures, they obtained those of 36 ministers of the highest standing in the church, and 3 ruling elders.†

* Fraser.

† These names are worthy of all honour. Geo. Gillespie, Strathmiglo; Geo. Freer, Lethendie; John Gibb, Cleish; James Ker, Dun; Peter Drummond, Crieff; John Currie, Kinglassie; Robert Laing, Newburgh; Robert Gray, Brechin; Geo. Meek, Redgorton; Lau. M'Intosh, Errol; Will. Wilson, Perth; James Fisher, Kinclaven; John Gow, Cargill; Thomas Nairn, Abbotshall; John Row, Navar and Lethnot; Alex. Moncrieff, Abernethy; Thos. Mair, Orwell; Robert Coventrie, Kilspindie; John M'Claren, Edinburgh; John Bonar, Torphichen; Ralph Erskine, Dunfermline; John Wardlaw, there; James Farquhar, Nigg; Ebenezer Erskine, Stirling; John Forbes, Deer; Gabriel Wilson, Maxton; William Henderson, Dalgety; Thomas Thomson, Auchtermuchty; Alex. Hamilton, Stirling; Charles Moor, there (father of Dr. John Moore and grandfather of Sir John Moore); William Hally, Muthil; David Stevenson, Glendovan; John Johnston, Brechin; James Goodsir, Monikie; Andrew Elliot, Auchtertoul; James Thomson, Burntisland; James Noble, Eckford; Geo. Mair, Newdeer; John Cranston, Ancrum; James Innes, Merton; Henry Davidson, Galashiels; Walter Hart, Bunkill—Ministers. Alex. Swinton of Strathore, Thomas Trotter, William

In clear, dignified, unimpassioned language, this representation, complains "of encroachments by the British legislature on the legal rights of the church, acknowledged and secured by the Articles of Union between the two kingdoms, and of the want of due resistance to these encroachments by the General Assembly; of the tolerance or inadequate censure of false doctrine; of the interfering with the undeniable right of Christian congregations to have the free choice of their own pastors, and the disregard of that call and consent which are necessary to found the pastoral relation; of the refusal to record reasons of dissent against the determinations of church judicatories; of the unconstitutional usurpations of the Commission of Assembly; and of the neglect of proper measures to check innovations in the method and strain of preaching, very offensive to many of God's people."

This representation, with a corresponding petition, was given in to the clerk of the Assembly, and read in the Committee of Bills; but though couched in the most unobjectionable terms, it was by them refused to be transmitted to the Assembly. Against this decision, the petitioners protested, and complained to the Assembly, who contemptuously refused even to hear their complaint. Nothing was left to these good men, but to give in a solemn protestation against this most unconstitutional and tyrannical procedure. This protest deserves to be recorded here. "We, the undersubscribing ministers of this church, finding, to our great grief, that our humble and dutiful representation anent grievances, offered to this General Assembly, is not received, or allowed hearing therein, though craved with all earnestness, and in the due and orderly way, find ourselves obliged, much against our inclination,

Walker — Elders. — *Humble Representation and Petition anent Grievances of some Ministers and Elders*, p. 14, 15. 4to. Edin. 1732.

and with all due deference to this venerable Assembly, humbly to protest, in our own name and in the name of all concurring in the said representation or adhering, *against* the said deed, and *for* the preservation of the just rights belonging to us as men, Christians, and office-bearers of this church (by the light of nature, word of God, constitutions of this church, claims of right, laws of the land, and manifold approven precedents since the Reformation to this day), to have representations and petitions anent grievances, which are or may be offered by ourselves or others to the General Assembly, or other judicatories of this church received, openly read and taken into serious consideration by the said courts for redress; and that the church's continuing still under the grievances specified in our representation, and others of like nature, shall be no wise chargeable on us: And we humbly crave that this may be recorded in the Assembly's register, and extracts allowed to us for exoneration."* At the same time the Assembly treated with equal contempt a representation of a similar kind subscribed by upwards of 1,700 persons not ministers or elders drawn up without any previous concert with the ministers.

The months that followed the meeting of that Assembly were with Mr. Fisher and those who thought and felt along with him, a season of deep and painful deliberation. His venerated friend and father, Ebenezer Erskine, who had been Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling at their last meeting, had made up his mind, when called in the ordinary course to preach at its approaching meeting in October, at all hazards,

* This protest was signed by 14 of the petitioners who had been appointed to act in the name of the rest. Dr. M'Kerrow states that the names of *all* the Fathers of the Secession were attached to this protest. In the copy *penes me*, Mr. Fisher's name does not appear, probably from his not having been at the Assembly.

to lift up his voice, in defence of the injured and insulted rights of his Master and brethren. He came to Kinclaven in the end of the week previously to the meeting of the Synod, and preached there on Sabbath the 8th of October, 1732. Tradition says, and there is obvious probability in the report, that the sermon delivered to the parishioners of Kinclaven was that which was delivered before the Synod on the Tuesday following, on Psal. cxviii. 22,—and adds, that the impression made by that sermon on the people contributed much to their abandoning the communion of the ruling party in the Establishment, almost as one man, in the course of a short period.* It is interesting to reflect on the probable course of conversation between the father and son-in-law, as they travelled together that Monday along the Tay, from Kinclaven to Perth. They no doubt felt their spirits stirred in them, and their hearts must have been agitated by painful anticipations; but they clearly apprehended their duty, and they were determined to perform it. They but indistinctly saw the probable consequences of the step resolved on to themselves as individuals, and could have no idea of the high results which, in reference to the religion of their native land, hung on their being faithful to their convictions of duty. But here, as in many another step in their eventful journey, "they went forth not knowing whither they went," but well knowing who led them, and firmly trusting HIM.

When the honest but measured utterance of disapprobation of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny contained in Mr. Erskine's Synod sermon had awakened the indignation of their abettors, and become the subject of judicial investigation, undeterred by a false delicacy which might have shrunk from a course which was sure to be, as in fact it was, ascribed to family attachment

* Communicated by the Rev. David Young, Kinclaven.

rather than to regard to truth and justice, Mr. Fisher took a decided part in defence of his venerable relative. Though prevented from his near relationship to the accused, from giving his vote in the question, as to whether Mr. Erskine's expressions were censurable, and consequently incapacitated from dissenting, as Messrs. Wilson and Moncrieff did, from the Synod's sentence finding them censurable, he availed himself of his constitutional privilege of protesting and complaining to the General Assembly.

At the meeting of the Assembly in May 1733, Mr. Fisher appeared, but was not permitted to be heard in support of his protest. The committee of bills refused to transmit his reasons of protest, most presumptuously pronouncing that he had "engyred" himself into the process not for the vindication of the truth, but on account of his connexion with the delinquent, for the purpose of endeavouring to screen him from deserved punishment.

The Assembly approved of the sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, and appointed Mr. Erskine to be rebuked and admonished at the bar. On the sentence of the Assembly being implemented, Mr. Erskine offered a solemn protestation, to which Mr. Fisher, along with Messrs. Wilson and Moncrieff, presented a written declaration of adherence. That protestation the Assembly refused to read, and it was thrown on the table among other papers. Had it been allowed to lie there, it is not improbable that the Secession would not have taken place when it did. It was, however, casually taken up and read by Mr. James Nasmith, minister of Dalmeny, "a fiery man," as Mr. Gib calls him, "in the corrupt measures of that time;" and, as his conduct in this instance proved him, a man more forward than wise. He had no sooner read it than he forced it on the attention of the Assembly as an insult which a regard to their own honour and authority could not

allow to be overlooked. The reading of the paper and its appendages produced the highest indignation throughout the Assembly. Mr. Erskine and his friends were closely dealt with, to induce them to withdraw their papers: and on their steadily refusing, the Assembly appointed them to appear before the Commission at their meeting in Edinburgh in August, and then and there to withdraw their papers and express their sorrow for having presented them; and in case that they did not comply with this requisition, the Commission was empowered to suspend them from the exercise of their ministry; and, should their sentence be disregarded, to proceed to higher censure at their meeting in November.

At the meeting of the Commission in August, Mr. Fisher with his associates firmly kept his ground. On being called to the bar and asked if he was not sorry for his conduct in adhering to the protestation given in by the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine to the last General Assembly, he calmly and resolutely answered in these well considered words, which have been preserved in the Minutes of the Commission: "Although I sincerely declare that I do not design, by the protestation given in against the decision of the last Assembly, to impugn the power and authority of the General Assembly to censure any of the ministers and members of this church upon just and relevant grounds, or the exercise of that power and authority according to the word of God and the known principles of this church; yet I am not sensible of any just ground of offence I have given by my conduct before the last Assembly, and therefore cannot declare my sorrow for it, nor retract the said protestation; but find it my duty to adhere thereunto, and to the papers given in this day under form of instrument."

With his "brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," Mr.

Fisher was, in consequence of this refusal to retract his protestation, suspended from the exercise of his ministry. On the suspension being intimated to him, he, with his brethren, gave in a solemn protestation, and under this protest they continued the discharge of their ministerial functions. We find them meeting together at Kinclaven on Sept. 19th, along with Mr. Ralph Erskine and Mr. John Gow of Cargill, who appears to have been an intimate friend of Mr. Fisher having baptized some of his children, and "spending the day in praying and seeking counsel of the Lord as to what they were next to do." Part of next day was also occupied in prayer and conference, and "the brethren came to find that in their circumstances, it was fit they should think, in case of their deposition next commismission, to be ready before it to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, and declare themselves not of the communion of the Church, with certain reserves."*

At the meeting of the Commission in November much displeasure was expressed at the disregard of the sentence of suspension, and by the casting vote of the Moderator, the Rev. Mr. Gowdie, it was resolved to proceed to a higher censure; though not without a dissent being entered by seven members of the Commission, among whom we find the singularly pious Mr. Alexander Wardrobe, first minister of Whitburn, the Lord Grange and Colonel Erskine, the grandfather of the venerable Dr. John Erskine of fragrant memory. The relation between Mr. Fisher and his brethren and their congregations was thus declared to be dissolved, and they were pronounced no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland. On this sentence being intimated to them, they in a written paper which, after reading, they left in the hands of the Clerk of the Assembly, declared their adherence to their former

* Fraser's Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine, pp. 203, 204.

protestations;—their determination to persevere in performing their ministerial duties to their congregations, with whom they held that their connexion continued unbroken;—their sense of injustice in being cast out of communion with the Established Church of Scotland, to the doctrine, discipline, and government of which they clung fast,—cast out on account of their constitutional efforts to defend these;—their readiness to hold communion with all who consistently adhered to these;—and their SECESSION from the prevailing party in that Church, on the ground of a course of defection, and especially of their suppression of ministerial freedom and faithfulness, and infliction of censures on ministers for witnessing against their backslidings. The lion-hearted Gabriel Wilson of Maxton protested against the sentence, and declared "that as he should find opportunity he would hold communion with his dear brethren, as if no such sentence had been passed against them." To this protest Ralph Erskine, Thomas Mair, John Maclaren, Edinburgh, John Currie, James Wardlaw, and Thomas Nairn, adhered.

Mr. Fisher and his brethren left the Assembly as the apostles did the Sanhedrim, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name;" and they retired to their respective homes, with the understanding that they must soon meet to consult as to what course they ought to adopt in their unprecedented circumstances, but without any fixed arrangement as to time and place. It was finally arranged that the meeting should take place at Gairney Bridge, in the neighbourhood of Kinross, on the 5th day of December. They accordingly met there, and after the greater part of two days had been spent in solemn prayer and serious deliberation by the Four Brethren, who were cheered by the presence of two men of kindred spirit, who ere long cast in their lot with them—the Rev. Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline and Thomas

Mair of Orwell—they saw their way clear to their forming themselves into a Presbytery, under the designation of THE ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY, "that they might be capable of performing all the functions of government to the congregations under their care;—that they might have a clear claim to the promise of the Master's presence, 'where two or three are met in his name;' that their union with each other might be consolidated; that they might afford a rallying point to the true but timid friends of ecclesiastical purity and freedom; and that they might be able more effectually to resist ecclesiastical tyranny, and relieve those who were its victims." "There was," says Ralph Erskine, "I thought, much of the Lord with them, and I found my heart frequently warmed and drawn out in prayer with them."* Mr. Fisher was chosen Clerk of the new judicatory, for which his distinct and beautiful handwriting and accurate habits peculiarly fitted him, and he continued for a number of years to discharge this office, which, from the number of applications that soon poured in on the Presbytery, (not fewer than seventy being made in 1737-8,) was found to be no sinecure. The first important deed of the Associate Presbytery was the preparation and publication of "A Testimony for the Doctrine, Government, and Discipline of the Church of Scotland;"—a calm, well-reasoned statement of the grounds on which they had acted, and were determined to continue to act. This was the work of Mr. Wilson assisted by Mr. Fisher.†

There was a considerable party in the Church, who, though not prepared fully to justify, and still less to

* Fraser's Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine, p. 207.

† MS. note by Mr. Gib. Indeed Mr. Fisher seems to have had a hand in almost all the public papers. Mr. Gib particularly mentions the introduction to the declinature as written by him.

imitate, the conduct of the Four Brethren, yet deeply regretted the arbitrary proceedings of the late Assemblies and Commissions, and had become seriously alarmed with regard to their probable consequences. Great and successful exertions were made by this party to secure members of their way of thinking for the Assembly in 1734; and the ruling faction beginning to see that they had by their violent measures created dangers which they did not know well how to meet, seem to have allowed their opponents to have a good deal of their own will in the elections. The consequence was one of the most extraordinary acts ever emitted by an ecclesiastical body. "The General Assembly," without application from any quarter,—"without farther inquiry into the occasions or steps of proceeding of Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher, who had separated from this Church and the judicatories thereof, or of the several judicatories under whose consideration their case had been, empowered the Synod of Perth and Stirling to take the case of these Four Brethren under their consideration, with full power to proceed and do therein as they shall find most justifiable and expedient for restoring the peace, and preserving the authority of this Church, and restoring them to their respective charges, without pronouncing any judgment favourable or unfavourable, on the former proceedings of the church judicatories in their cause."

The Synod of Perth and Stirling showed no backwardness in attempting to undo what had been the unlooked-for result of their intemperate rashness. At their meeting in July they followed up this remarkable empowerment, by, at one sweep, removing, without application from any of the Four Brethren, and without any condition express or implied, the sentences pronounced by the Commission in 1733, against them, restoring them to ministerial communion and reponing them in

their charges. They even went so far as to elect Mr. Ebenezer Erskine to be their Moderator, and appointed a deputation to wait on him to request him to occupy the chair.

As the Associate Brethren were not to be terrified, so they were not to be seduced from what they saw to be the path of duty. They showed themselves equally superior to flattery as to fear. Had they been vain men, never perhaps had there been such an opportunity of having vanity gratified.* But they were men of "another spirit," and were determined to "follow the Lord fully." They took the proposal into serious consideration; but after thoughtful and prayerful deliberation, they saw that no explicit condemnation of what they held to be tyranny and injustice had been given, no pledge to retrace the steps of defection, and to proceed in a course of remonstrance with the civil power on its encroachments, and of internal reformation; and that therefore it was clearly their duty to continue for the present in that state of judicial separation from the ruling party of the Church into which they had been so wonderfully conducted; and they assigned reasons for the course they had resolved on, not more remarkable for the soundness of their substance than for the calmness of their manner. Subsequent events soon made it plain to them and all considerate observers that they had judged rightly.†

* This is admirably put by Dr. Harper in the following most graphical sentence:—"A weak man might have been excused if, in Mr. Erskine's circumstances, he had imagined himself vaulting into the saddle while the Synod held the stirrup, and with studied civilities attended him as he rode over rescinded acts, and recanted charges to the Hall of the Assembly, amid the abashed looks of humbled dignitaries, and the shoutings of a triumphant people."—*Memoir of Ebenezer Erskine*, p. 65.

† Even Sir Henry Moncrieff (in his Appendix to his Life of Dr. Erskine, pp. 448, 449, 452) admits, that if the Seceders had given way, and returned to the Church on this occasion, they

The parishioners of Kinclaven adhered almost without exception to their discarded minister. Instead of abandoning his ministrations they clung closer to him than ever. They had had "full proof of his ministry and manner of life," and were persuaded that he and his honoured associates had been "cast out by their brethren," for their fidelity to the honour of their Master and to the privileges of his people; and that they were called on to bear testimony against the error and tyranny which was permitted to prevail in the Established Church. It was not till August 1735, that the Associate Presbytery proceeded to exercise judicial functions, so careful were they "to do nothing rashly;" and Kinclaven and Abernethy seem to have had the honour of being the first two congregations that, through their sessions, formally acceded to the Presbytery.

The deed of accession, on the part of Kinclaven, well deserves a place here. *"Kinclaven Manse, October 25th, 1736,—Which day and place the session met, and after prayer by the minister, were present, &c., &c., &c. The session taking into consideration the present lamentable state of the Established Church of Scotland; that the General Assemblies thereof have restrained ministerial faithfulness in preaching and the liberty of protesting against their decisions, however unlawful, and have ejected four ministers from their communion for refusing to give up with these valuable rights of the office-bearers of Zion's King; that gross errors and blasphemies have been vented by some members of the Church, and yet no way duly censured or testified against, when the cause of truth came before the su-

would have been disappointed. The prevailing party were not overpowered; they were merely allowing their opponents to do what they themselves could not do with a good grace, but with a resolution to hold the reins as tight as ever.

* This interesting document has been already printed in Dr. M'Kerrow's History, p. 173, 2d edition.

preme judicatories, whereby that cause is left bleeding in our streets; that as the heritage of God, for several years past, has been oppressed by intrusions into the ministry, the same continue still to be countenanced; and likewise considering that the Established Church have refused to make a faithful acknowledgment, to the glory of God, of our own iniquities, and the iniquities of our fathers; and the session having heard read 'the causes of God's wrath against this church and land,' both in former and present times, drawn up by the ministers associated together for the exercise of government and discipline in a presbyterial capacity, it was moved what should be the duty of this session in the present juncture; whereupon one was desired to pray, and after prayer and long reasoning upon the said motion, the question was put: 'Take up the testimony contained in the above-mentioned causes of the Lord's wrath, and accede to the Presbytery of the ministers associated for the exercise of church government and discipline, or not?' It carried unanimously, 'Take up the testimony, contained in the above mentioned causes of the Lord's wrath, in all the branches of it; and they did, and hereby do, accede to the Presbytery of the ministers associated for the exercise of government and discipline; and upon a leet being made, Thomas Watson was chosen to attend the meetings of Presbytery for the ensuing half year."

It may be right to state here, though the fact, like so many others in this Memoir, have no exclusive reference to Mr. Fisher's personal history, that in the close of the year 1736, an able and most elaborate apologetical narrative or historical defence of the course taken by the Seceders, was published by the Associate Presbytery, under the title of "An act, declaration, and testimony, for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland." This document is commonly known by the name of The Second

—or the Judicial Testimony. This, like the first Testimony, was, in a great degree, the joint work of Messrs. Wilson and Fisher.*

In the course of this year we find that Mr. Fisher, with the Erskine brothers and Messrs. Moncrieff and Mair, assisted Mr. Bonar of Torphichen in administering the communion, and that, along with Mr. Wilson, he visited by request the west of Scotland, where a considerable interest had been excited by the events connected with the Secession. By their ministrations and conversations a very favourable impression was made in many quarters, and the foundation of a number of congregations laid; among the rest that of the large society in the city of Glasgow, of which Mr. Fisher was ere long to become the minister.

Mr. Fisher's audience at Kinclaven, so far from being diminished by what had taken place, was considerably increased. Many from the parishes of Little Dunkeld, Redgorton, Monedie, Caputh, Lethendy, Cluny, and Cargill, approving of the ground taken by the Associate Brethren, placed themselves under his ministry. On occasion of the administration of the Lord's supper, great crowds of devout worshippers, not only from the neighbourhood, but from the west of Scotland, and even from Ireland, collected at Kinclaven. Hospitably as the people were disposed to entertain the host of strangers which poured in on them on such occasions, they were unable to accommodate them all in their houses, or even in their barns. Some of them were accustomed to spend the night in the parish church, and others encamped in a neighbouring wood called the Hill of Kinclaven. Tradition tells of Mr. Ralph Erskine, when on one occasion assisting his esteemed relative at the administration of the Lord's supper, having gone early into the wood on the morn-

* MS. note of Mr. Gib.

ing of the Communion Sabbath, and on his return saying to his brethren in the manse, "We are likely to have a good day I think, for the birds are singing very sweetly in the wood," referring to the sounds of prayer and praise which he had heard from all quarters.* The following notices from that good man's diary respecting Kinclaven communions are interesting: "*Sabbath*, *July* 2*d*, 1738. I heard Mr. Fisher, in his action sermon on that word 'It is finished.' His proofs that the work was finished and inferences therefrom were refreshing to me." "*Saturday*, *July* 28*th*, 1739. This evening I had a public exercise before the Sacrament at Kinclaven, and preached on Gal. ii. 20. On Sabbath I communicated at a table served by my brother, and was quickened there by hearing that Christ was alive, and that all the words on which he has caused us to hope are more on his heart than ours. This was a mean of quickening, and when I went alone, my heart was poured out, by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. I was strengthened in preaching at the text upon the love of Christ being a giving love, and strengthened in serving *seven* tables, especially the two last except one; at which two, the communicants and hearers seemed to be greatly moved, for there was some remarkable breathing." "*Monday*, *July* 30. — This morning being obliged, I studied and preached; though unprepared I was helped in studying and preaching.— I preached from a heart, as it were, full of Christ and of desire to win souls to him. The Lord was with me in the closet, and with me in the tent. . . . . I preached before my brother Ebenezer, and many went away with the conviction that God was in the place."†

In the autumn of this year we find Mr. Fisher accompanying Ralph Erskine in visiting Dryburgh,

* MacKerrow, p. 833. 2d ed.

† Fraser's life and diary of the Rev. Ralph Erskine, p. 259, 260.

Ebenezer's birth-place, and Shielfield, the possession of their ancestors—Stichell and Sir Robert Pringle, the only titled adherent the Secession could boast of—Maxton and its worthy minister Gabriel Wilson, and taking a part in the ordination at Gateschaw of Mr. Hunter, the eloquent first licentiate of the Associate Presbytery.*

In August 1738, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Ralph Erskine went to the south-west of Scotland, to preach among Mr. Hepburn's people—the Cameronians, as they were commonly called. Six or seven ministers heard them, with whom they conversed afterwards, and "Mr. Fisher," says Ralph Erskine in his diary, "sustained a debate with them to great advantage."†

The General Assembly in 1738 perceiving that there was no prospect of the return of the Seceders to the church, except on the ground of a much more thorough change in administration than they probably thought either practicable or advisable,—and hoping perhaps to deter persons from joining their fellowship, had proceeded towards what, however consistent with ecclesiastical law and usage, must be considered as a most wanton desecration of a high censure, which ought never to be pronounced but on men clearly proved guilty of dangerous error or plain immorality. The Commission which met in November, acting under their orders, put a libel into the hand of Mr. Fisher and the other members of the Associate Presbytery. As a body they drew up a solemn declinature of the authority of the Assembly, which their Moderator read before the Assembly at its meeting in 1739. Instead of proceeding, as might have been expected, to the highest ecclesiastical clerical censure—the Assembly, for reasons not difficult to divine, deferred it for a twelvemonth, and

* Fraser's life and diary of the Rev. Ralph Erskine, p. 261, 262.
† Ibid. p. 275, 276.

then, as no symptoms of penitence or returning allegiance manifested themselves on the part of the Seceding Ministers, at their meeting, 1740, they formally deposed from the office of the ministry—men who, for integrity, piety, and unspotted reputation had no superiors in the land, and who, as to ministerial qualification, stood on a level with the most respectable of their brethren. This ecclesiastical thunderbolt was hurled against the four brethren and the four associates who had united themselves with them since their formation of themselves into a Presbytery.* It was truly a "telum imbelle." It came too late. It did not reach its mark. It proved the importance of the Secession, but did nothing to stay its course.

* The Rev. Messrs. Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, Thomas Mair of Orwell, Thomas Nairn of Abbotshall, and James Thomson of Burntisland.

CHAPTER III.

1740—1747.

Ejected from the Church and Manse of Kinclaven, 1741 — Call to Glasgow — Admission to Glasgow — Introductory Sermon — Controversy with the Rev. Mr. James Robe respecting the "Kilsyth and Cambuslang work" — Publications on that subject — Character of them — Rebellion in 1745 — Thanksgiving Sermon, 1746 — Burgess Oath Controversy—The Breach, 1747.

When the minister appointed to intimate the sentence of the Assembly came to Kinclaven, he found, on his arrival on the Lord's day morning, the church already crowded, and the pulpit filled by its usual occupant, and was obliged to perform the work assigned him, at the west end of the church, in the presence of two witnesses, specially summoned, to afford valid evidence of the appointment of the Assembly having been carried into execution.

Mr. Fisher's Presbytery seem, upon the whole, to have acted with much kindly forbearance towards him. On receiving the letter from the Commission of August 1733, recommending them to supply the pulpit of their suspended brother, they "found that it would not be for edification to supply that charge presently"—though Mr. Adam Ferguson of Killin, father of the celebrated Professor of the same name, for a reason which soon became apparent, protested against this finding. They appointed a committee to deal with Mr. Fisher, and it was not till the 4th of December that they appointed Mr. Man to repair to Kinclaven and intimate the Commission's sentence—and though Mr. Man reported at next meeting that he had fulfilled the appointment, they still at successive meetings delayed appointing supplies.

On the 18th June, 1734, a presentation to the vacant kirk and parish made its appearance, addressed to Mr. Adam Ferguson, but the Presbytery delayed the whole affair till they were forbidden to proceed by the Synod, which, in accordance with the appointment of the Assembly, had removed the suspension. Even after the deposition by the Assembly, while the Presbytery appointed their officer to deliver a copy of the Assembly's Act to the Session Clerk, to be communicated to the elders, they still delayed sending supply. At last, when the heritors petitioned the Presbytery, on the 14th of October, to appoint Mr. James Bishop to preach at Kinclaven, the Presbytery, but not till their next meeting, complied with the request. On going there, however, he could find no access. Mr. Bishop received a presentation from the heritors on the 7th April, 1741, and legal measures were ere long adopted to find him entrance into the church and manse.*

Mr. Fisher continued to reside in the manse, and to preach in the church of Kinclaven, till August 13th, 1741, when three officers of the law intimated a decree of execution formally passed, and gave Mr. Fisher a charge thereupon to remove from kirk and manse within forty-eight hours, under pain of forcible ejection and other penalties. His last sermon, on Sabbath Aug. 9th, was from Rom. vii. 24, 25. On the 15th day of that month, the same officers having been refused the keys of the church, went in by the windows, put a new lock on one of the doors, and iron plates over the key holes. Thus deprived of the use of the church, Mr. Fisher preached in a tent at Kinclaven braeside during the short period he continued in that part of the country.† Towards the end of this year Mr. Fisher had an addition of twin children to his family,

* Minutes of the Presbytery of Dunkeld.

† Information contained in a note in one of Mr. Fisher's note books.

which we notice chiefly that we may chronicle here his tribute to the memory of a dear "brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," as recorded in his Family Register. "Our two children, Margaret and James, were born in Perth, Saturday, Oct. 31st, 1741, about three in the morning. They were baptized next day, being Sabbath November 1st, by Mr. William Wilson, minister at Perth, which was the last piece of public ministerial work performed by that eminent servant of Jesus Christ. He died Nov. 14th, 1741."*

Among the societies of Christians in various quarters of the country, who applied to the Associate Presbytery to be placed in church order, and, by being taken under their care, to be secured of the enjoyment of ecclesiastical freedom, the dispensation of a pure gospel, and the exercise of a wholesome discipline, none, with the exception perhaps of that in the metropolis, could compare for importance with the association in the, even then, wealthy and populous city of Glasgow. Its site afforded an excellent central point from which to operate on the west of Scotland, and its members were considerably numerous, and many of them distinguished for worldly as well as Christian respectability. This society, when formed into a congregation, soon fixed their eyes on Mr. Fisher, as from his comparative youth, as well as from his pulpit talents and remarkable amenity of manners, peculiarly fitted to fill a sphere which was likely to become of much importance; and took constitutional measures to have their wishes gratified. In the summer of 1740, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine presided in a moderation of a call in the congregation of Glasgow, and Mr. Fisher was unanimously elected. Seventeen voted for Mr. Ralph Erskine, but all these subscribed the call.†

* MS. in possession of Mrs. Crum, Thornliebank.

† Minutes of Associate Session of Glasgow.

Translations were not in good odour with the better part of the Scotch clergy and people in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and considerable difficulties were to be got over with the Presbytery, as well as with Mr. Fisher and the people of Kinclaven. The call was presented to the Presbytery at Abernethy on the 17th June, and the conduct of the moderator approved of, but the question of sustaining the call was deferred till a meeting at Stirling in October. "After much reasoning" the call was sustained, the reasons of transportation sent to the "parish of Kinclaven," and parties summoned to attend for their interest. A conviction was lodged in Mr. Fisher's mind, that in the whole circumstances of the case he had the call of his Master to go to Glasgow. His affectionate people were not only willing but desirous to retain him, and employed every means in their power to secure their object. Some of his brethren were decidedly for his continuance, and it was not till July 22d, 1741, that the Presbytery agreed to his translation—a decision that occasioned deep and lasting regret to his attached people.

For three years after Mr. Fisher left Kinclaven the bereaved congregation worshipped God either in barns or in the woods under the canopy of heaven. At last they obtained the lease of the ground on which their present church and manse stand, and it is said the congregation of Glasgow gave them a donation of twenty pounds, to assist them in the erection of these buildings.

It is a striking fact, that after the lapse of nearly 110 years since Mr. Fisher left them, the great body of the people in the neighbourhood still belong to the religious denomination of which he was one of the founders. The recollections of the district, as to the first Seceding minister, are highly favourable. They speak of his private amiableness and public usefulness,

of his fervent love of truth and freedom, of his conscientious diligence in professional duties, of his being the welcome guest of the great, and the kind friend of the poor. His fine personal appearance is still talked of, and Mr. Wilson's remark about him is proverbial that "he had the face of an eagle."*

It is one of the most painful trials in human life, when a Christian minister, happy and useful in the midst of a flock who have chosen him, and whom he has chosen in the morning of his days when the affections are warm, is called to leave them for an obviously wider sphere of professional usefulness. It is well that such trials are comparatively of rare occurrence. The pastoral tie is a very sacred one—and on both sides it is best, when it is formed, that the feeling should be, that it is likely to last for life. Things are in a deplorable state in a religious body, when translation, and even repeated translation, is the rule, not the rare exception. At the same time there are cases where there can be no reasonable doubt that removal is the path of duty,—however repugnant it may be to feeling; and he who, in these cases, makes the sacrifice from a regard to his Master and his cause, however the principles on which he acts may be misunderstood by those whom he dearly loves though he feels compelled to leave them, and however painful may be the effects of such misunderstandings, may rejoice that there is One who knows the whole matter, and that it is to Him he has to give his account. He will not misconstrue his object nor undervalue his sacrifice. Mr. Fisher's case was a very clear one—yet he did not escape unkind remark from those of whom better things might have been expected.

Mr. Fisher's induction to the charge of the congregation in Glasgow, afterwards known as the Congregation of Shuttle-street, and more lately of Greyfriars

* Information communicated by Mr. Young of Kinclaven.

—a congregation second to none—I believe I might have safely said "facile princeps" among the congregations of the Secession for liberal support to Christian Institutions, took place on October 8th, 1741, in the open air, at Crosshill, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, about a mile to the south in the parish of Cathcart, where they had been accustomed to worship, and continued to do so till their church was built. On that occasion the Rev. James Mair of West Linton, at whose ordination Mr. Fisher had preached the year preceding, commenced the services by a sermon on 1 Thess. v. 25. The Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, who presided, preached the admission sermon from Psal. cii. 17. and addressed the minister and congregation, and the Rev. Ralph Erskine closed the solemn work by a sermon on Acts vii. 34.* which is to be found among his published works.

Mr. Fisher commenced his ministry in Glasgow by preaching on the Sabbath immediately succeeding his induction from 2 Cor. ii. 16. and 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Who is sufficient for these things?"—"Our sufficiency is of God." We have before us pretty full notes of this sermon, taken by Mr. Henry Erskine, son of Ralph Erskine, afterwards minister of Falkirk, then a student of divinity. It appears to have been a plain, solid, useful, appropriate, discourse. We give the concluding paragraph: "1. Is it so that ministers are utterly insufficient of themselves, and that their sufficiency is of God? Then ministers of all men in the world have reason to be the most humble. Why should a man be proud of that which he has received? Indeed if any minister or Christian be proud, it is an evidence that 'he knows nothing at all as he ought to know it.' 2. People should beware of overvaluing the instruments,—putting their ministers in Christ's room. 'Who is

* Minutes of the Associate Presbytery.

Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers,' or servants, 'by whom ye believed?' Overvaluing instruments provokes the Lord to withdraw his countenance, to blast their labours, to give 'a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.' 3. See the duty of people with respect to their minister. They should pray for him that he may be furnished out of the all-sufficiency of God. Read Rom. xv. 30—32; Eph. vi. 18, 19. 4. Ministers ought to be trading much with God, in prayer and meditation, believing the promises and searching the Scriptures. Oh how dry, how melancholy, how wearisome a work it is when ministers have no recourse to God, but take all their help from men and the works of men! 5. Be persuaded that there is enough for us all in our God,—enough for ministers and enough for people. This fountain is still overflowing; the waters of the sanctuary are still as deep as ever. The river proceeding out of the throne of God is a river that may be swimmed in still. Be verily persuaded that all the fulness of God is for *you*. Believe that all the fulness which is in Christ as Mediator is offered to you. 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.' The table spread for you in this gospel is furnished with nothing less than the all-sufficiency of God, and therefore fall on, honour God by believing that 'Christ is of God made to you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,'—that he is your Saviour as God gives him unto you in his word. And if you were minting at this, you might the more expect your minister to be furnished with the words of grace suitable for 'nourishing you up to everlasting life.' "*

For more than a year Mr. Fisher preached and administered ordinances in the open air, either at Crosshill or in a yard off the Rotenrow, the property of which the congregation had acquired, but which they after-

* MS. collections of the late Dr. Fraser.

wards disposed of on procuring the more advantageous site in Shuttle-street, on which they erected a large and commodious place of worship. The foundation of this structure was laid March 1742, and, though not finished, it was opened for worship on the first Sabbath of November that year.

The solid, instructive character of Mr. Fisher's pulpit instructions, clothed as they were in familiar perspicuous language, and delivered in a lively and dignified yet simple and natural manner, combined with his diligent and affectionate private ministrations, soon brought around him a very large congregation, which continued, with one exception to be noticed in the course of the narrative, unbroken for more than thirty years. The size of the congregation may be judged of from the fact, that at the administration of the Lord's Supper there were usually 17 or 18 table services, and that, though Mr. Fisher was brief in his public services,* and not very tolerant of those who were otherwise, the communion service, which commenced at 9 or 10 in the morning, did not close sometimes till between 9 and 10 in the evening. †

* Mr. James Erskine notices that on one occasion at Falkirk he preached only a quarter of an hour, and the ordinary length of his discourses does not seem to have exceeded 40 minutes or three-quarters of an hour. The *first* Seceders were generally, if not universally, short preachers: so was Mr. Boston.

† The congregation embraced not only the city of Glasgow and parishes of Barony and Gorbals, but the parishes of Old Monkland, Calder, Kirkintilloch, Rutherglen, Cambuslang, Carmunnock, Cathcart, and Eastwood. Mearns, in which parish the Seceders seem to have been numerous and influential, very soon became the seat of a separate congregation.—The following abstract of the services at a Shuttle-street communion, transcribed from one of Mr. Fisher's note-books, is not without its interest. "Fast-day, Thursday June 18, 1761. Forenoon, Mr. Archd. Hall, Psal. lxviii. 18; Mr. Belfrage, Rom. viii. 1. Afternoon, Mr. Thomson from Ireland, Deut. xxxii. 6. Friday night, Mr. Hall, Hos. xiv. 4. Saturday—Within, Mr. Belfrage, Gal. v. 17; Mr. Smith, Song i. 4. Without, Mr. Thomson, Deut.

In the first year of his ministry in Glasgow, commenced under very favourable omens, Mr. Fisher's attention was unhappily distracted in, if not from, his pastoral duties, by the very remarkable movements of a religious nature which occurred at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and some other places, under the occasional ministrations of that simple-minded, warm-hearted, devoted servant of Christ, the Rev. George Whitefield, then on a visit to Scotland. At first sight it may seem strange that Mr. Fisher and the other seceding ministers should take so active, and especially so hostile, a part, in reference to those measures with which, it may be thought, they had very little to do. But whatever judgment we may form of the wisdom or propriety of their interference, it is not at all difficult to account for its occurrence. It was not wanton fondness for strife that led the Seceders into the fray.

The violent external commotions, amounting in many cases to strong convulsions, which accompanied professed conviction of sin, and sense of forgiveness, among Mr. Whitefield's hearers, so different from the calm though deep religious feeling that shrinks from all expression except to its immediate Object, and avoids everything that can attract attention, which had long constituted the leading feature of Scottish spiritual experience; and the supposed encouragement given to men to seek within themselves, in their own imaginary ideas and excited feelings, that ground of hope and that rule of duty which the Scriptures lead a man to seek entirely

xxxii. 6; Mr. M'Cara, Lam. i. 16. Evening exercise, Mr. Cock, Psal. cxxx. 5. Sabbath, at the tent. Mr. Thomson, Mr. Smith, Mr. Hall, Mr. Horn, Mr. M'Cara, Mr. Belfrage, Mr. Cock, Mr. Hall, Mr. Thomson. There were 18 tables. The service began at half-past 9, A.M., and ended half-past 9, P.M. Monday—Within, Mr. M'Cara, 2 Sam. vii. 19; Mr. Horn, 2 Cor. vii. 16. Without, Mr. Hall, Mr. Cock." On another occasion, 1756, when there were 17 tables, it is stated that there were 1,286 communicants.

without himself, in the work of Christ and the character and will of God, were fitted to excite suspicions in minds, which, though habitually and powerfully influenced by divine truth, were but little disposed either to mysticism or to enthusiasm;* and these suspicions had certainly been strengthened by the invidious light, in which those revivals of religion or outpourings of the Holy Ghost were represented, by some very worthy but in this respect not very wise persons, as evident tokens of God's displeasure at the Seceders for abandoning a church, in connection with which he was performing such miracles of saving mercy.†

* That Mr. Fisher and his friends were really persuaded that there was *much* delusion among the Cambuslang and Kilsyth converts cannot be doubted—and that they had evidence that there was *some* delusion among them can as little be doubted; and though we must regret deeply their one-sided view of the whole matter, and their rash all but entire condemnation of what by its fruits proved that there was much in it from heaven as well as something from men, yet we believe the honest object of their contendings is that expressed in the words of Ralph Erskine: "May this generation be preserved from an imaginary faith, religion, and conversion, which will neither unite them to the true Christ, nor bring them to the true heaven, nor keep them out of the true hell; and from the truth as it is in men's fancy and imagination instead of 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' and in his blessed word, 'the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God!'" That is a good wish for all men in all time. It assuredly is not unseasonable in our own times.

† "The cry is raised, 'God is now remarkably owning the ministers of the Established Church, notwithstanding all the evils complained of: He is crowning their ministrations with remarkable success: Nations are born in one day by their means: There is no such countenance given to the Assemblies of the Seceders: and therefore, the People ought to disown them, whom God is disowning: God is now testifying that there was no ground for seceding from the Established Church, when he is holding fellowship with her in such a visible and open manner.'" —*Fisher's Review of Robe's Preface*, p. 47. It was shrewdly answered by George Findlay, a plain Kilsyth Seceder, to these statements—"Although I were persuaded, from the word of God, that it is the saving work of the Spirit of the Lord, I would not

Among these the Rev. Mr. James Robe of Kilsyth held a foremost place. In "a preface to a narrative of the extraordinary work at Kilsyth and its neighbourhood, and in an address to the Brethren of the Associate Presbytery anent their act for a public fast," this good man had made statements which, to say the least, seemed to require to be noticed by the Seceders, and which Mr. Fisher, with his warm temper and public spirit, was not likely to think it right to allow to pass without animadversion. He accordingly published in 1742, "A Review of Mr. Robe's Preface and Address," which, though in no degree discreditable to the acuteness of his mind, the orthodoxy of his principles, or the integrity of his character, does manifestly show how very imperfect and one-sided a view he had taken of the whole subject, and is far from having for its leading feature "the meekness of wisdom."*

see my warrant in the word to bury a Testimony for truth, and return to the Establishment."—*Ibid.*, p. 61. Mr. Bisset complains of "some ministers and elders, because of the extremes of the Seceders, having given up with all their former contendings, and invited, employed, and caressed a subverter of our government as it would seem, for this end—to break the Seceders." —*Bisset's Letter to a Gentleman in Edinburgh*, pp. 4, 5. Edin., 1742.

* The following is a favourable specimen of Mr. Fisher's polemic style. Mr. M'Culloch had said that he believed that there were "Five hundred savingly brought home to God, not including counterfeits and those who had nothing but a dread of hell." On this statement Mr. Fisher remarks, "The reason why a sober [minded] man will scarce venture to attest 'the real conversion' of multitudes, is obvious. There are many hypocrites in the visible church, by whom all the outward evidences of grace may be so exactly counterfeited, that the most quicksighted Christian may mistake a hypocrite for a true believer: for though believers may attain to an assurance of their own particular interest in Christ, yet all the evidence we have of the conversion of another being merely external, we may for the above reason be liable to manifold mistakes; yet the internal distinguishing evidences are so plainly laid down in the word, that none examining themselves thereby under the influ-

We can look back on these scenes with minds undisturbed by prejudice and passion, and see in them a remarkable display of the sovereignty and power of divine grace rendering the clear impressive statement of elementary gospel truth effectual to the conversion of many sinners of very various descriptions, who showed the true character of the change produced by a long course of consistent Christian conduct; while we equally clearly perceive, that there were accom-

ence of the Spirit of truth, but will come to discern the real and wide difference between hypocrisy and saving grace. There is no doubt but all the true lovers of Jesus would earnestly wish that there were many thousands savingly converted, for every one that is here alleged; but people are never in a more dangerous condition than when they persuade themselves and are strongly persuaded by others, that they are converted, if in the meanwhile they are 'in the gall of bitterness' still: Yea, though in the judgment of charity we thought them in a converted state, yet the safest way would be to put them upon examining themselves 'whether they be in the faith.' Besides, I find the ministers of Christ who have been honoured of the Lord to be most instrumental in convincing and converting work have been most denied as to their own instrumentality, that he who builds the Temple of the Lord may bear all the glory. The Apostle Peter was most successful of any we read of at one time, Acts ii. 21. But does he send letters to all the countries around, to acquaint them that such a day he had been instrumental in converting three thousand? The Lord was pleased to send down a plentiful rain of divine influences during the time of Mr. Livingstoun's sermon at the Kirk of Shotts, but doth he proclaim it through all the world that so many hundreds were converted at that time by his means? Nay, he draws a modest vail over it in the history of his life."—*Fisher's Review of Robe's Preface*, pp. 7, 8. It is however deplorable to find a man like Mr. Fisher sanctioning Mr. Bisset's (of Aberdeen) intemperate railing,—calling Mr. Whitefield—a man of truly apostolic character—"a strolling impostor and cheat." Tradition tells that *this* was at least *one* point in which Mrs. Fisher did not harmonize in opinion and feeling with him whom she loved to call lord. Mr. Fisher himself was accustomed to say, that had he been aware of the distinguished worth of Jonathan Edwards, he would have treated him in his "Review" with much greater respect.—*Fraser's Diary of Ralph Erskine.*

paniments of this manifestation, which owed their origin to human weakness and depravity, if not to a darker spiritual influence. But when was there ever a religious movement, though giving upon the whole satisfactory evidence of a divine origin, unattended by such drawbacks? When did the great Sower of truth, the Son of Man, disperse his good seed, where the enemy did not accompany or speedily follow him with his tares?

I am certainly not disposed to become Mr. Fisher's advocate on this occasion; but it is difficult for us, in circumstances so different, to make the due allowance for the disturbing influences to which the minds of both parties were exposed. The violence of the opposition, raised to, what was on the part of Mr. Fisher, the expression of conscientious however mistaken opinion, may be estimated in some measure by the following note, which I transcribe from the original MS., using a little freedom with the orthography. The Latin grammar is left untouched.—"Glasgow, 23d ——, 1743, —Sir,—If you had spoken of Mr. Whitefield last Sunday, you would have been pulled out of the tent; and if for the future you mention Whitefield or Cambuslang, both your house and tent shall be burnt; and Sunday first if you speak one word against him, you shall be pulled out of the tent. So take care what you do. W. D. 'Memento meo dicto.' Rev. Mr. Fisher."

It is to be hoped that Christians generally have now learned more sufferance of diversity of individual opinion and action on such subjects, and have come to the conclusion that when we see men casting out devils, though not quite in the way which we think best fitted to accomplish the purpose, the fact that we cannot conscientiously take a part with them by no means infers the obligation, of our forbidding or endeavouring to prevent them from attempting to do what we hold to be a very desirable thing in what they think, though we

do not, the most desirable way. There are devils enough for us all to cast out, and it is a pity to waste the time that should be devoted to casting them out, to debates about the comparative minutiæ of our different ways of employing the divinely appointed means, the preaching of the truth, for effecting the exorcism which we all so much long for.

In the autumn of 1742, the Associate Presbytery gave forth their "act concerning the doctrine of grace," the joint production of Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine and Moncrieff, containing a clear exhibition and an able defence of all that is most characteristic in "the gospel of the grace of God." And no one of the brethren could more cordially concur in this much needed testimony in behalf of the sovereign grace of God as the sole source of man's salvation,—the work of Christ the sole meritorious ground of this salvation,—and the free offer, without exception, to mankind of this salvation, in all its freeness and fulness, than Mr. Fisher. In every one of his published sermons these doctrines are most prominently brought forward, and to exhibit and defend them is the great object of that explication of the Shorter Catechism to the composition of which he afterwards devoted so much time and attention.

In the close of the year 1743, Mr. Fisher took part with his brethren of the Presbytery, on the 28th day of December, at Stirling, when, with uplifted hands, they renewed the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms, in a manner agreeable to their present circumstances. In doing so, they only acted out the principles which in common with the great body of the pious members of the Church of Scotland they held: and though we more than doubt the propriety of the step they took, and the truth of some of the principles on which it was based, and see in much that followed a practical demonstration of the hazard of involving matters of hu-

man history, and questions as to the propriety or impropriety of the conduct of individuals or bodies of men, in matters of Christian profession and worship, we cannot but cordially honour their conscientious consistency.

On March 13, 1744, Mr. Fisher presided at the ordination of Mr. Henry Erskine, eldest son of Mr. Ralph Erskine, to the charge of the Associate congregation of Falkirk. The text of the ordination sermon was 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

In the year 1745, when an insane and wicked attempt was made to subvert the civil and religious liberties of this country, by the restoration of the Stuart dynasty to a throne most justly forfeited by the perfidious violation of all its most important duties on the part of its last occupants, Mr. Fisher in common with all his Associate brethren, took an active part in upholding the standard of liberty and law as raised in defence of the Brunswick family. Following in the steps of his venerable father-in-law, Ebenezer Erskine, he exerted his influence over his numerous congregation to fill the ranks of those two battalions, of six hundred men each, raised by the city of Glasgow, and placed under the command of the Earl of Home; and it is said that when they marched to Falkirk, where through the mismanagement of the rash and shamelessly profane and profligate Hawley* so many of them

* That those epithets, strong as they are, are not misapplied, will appear from the following anecdote, which, though not so far as we know recorded, we have reason to think substantially authentic. The Rev. Mr. Bisset of Aberdeen, a man holding the views of the Seceders, and whose people after his death joined the Secession, had publicly rebuked General Hawley for profane language at an entertainment given to the Duke of Cumberland and his officers as they went North. The reproof was resented, and the General said to the Commander-in-chief that "he would smoke the parson yet." On the return of the army from Culloden the Duke and his officers were again entertained

met with death or capture, Mr. Fisher went to that town to encourage them to "play the men" in the cause of their country.

In the autumn of 1746, we find Mr. Fisher along with his congregation engaged in solemn thanksgiving, by appointment of Synod, for deliverance from the rebels. The sermon of that day, in pretty full notes by Mr. James Erskine, son of Ralph Erskine, afterwards one of the ministers of Stirling, and son-in-law to Mr. Fisher, lies now before me. The text of the whole day's services was Phil. iii. 3. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus." It is a judicious, affectionate gospel sermon, with singularly little reference to its occasion, or to public affairs generally. In this respect it resembles Richard Baxter's Thanksgiving sermon for the Restoration. They both "show the higher joys which must animate joys for national deliverances, or they will be but dead corrupted things." We give the concluding paragraph: "Oh beware of resting on the receipt of temporal mercies. Many may have an abundance of temporal mercies, for a season, without a blessing. Beware of thinking, because God has been pleased to bring about deliverance for us, at this day and time, so as we now enjoy liberty, that this is an evidence that the Lord is pleased. No. The Lord's anger may be standing, for you will find that mercies have been bestowed on those, against whom the Lord's anger was kindled because of the abuse of mercies. How many mercies did Israel get in the wilderness, and yet

by the magistrates of Aberdeen. Mr. Bisset was of course present. Hawley, after dinner, proposed an indecent toast. Mr. Bisset's glass stood untouched. "Don't you drink the toast, Sir?" said the General. "No, Sir," replied Mr. Bisset, "I do not drink the toast." "Pray then, Sir, what do you do with it?" "Do with it!—I do with it as General Hawley did with the Highlanders at Falkirk—I turn my back on it." The laugh was against the General, and the Commander-in-chief said aloud to him, "Smoke the parson now, Hawley!"

the Lord was so angry that he 'sware in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest?' Beware of thinking because God has quelled the rebellion, he is well pleased with us. No. Remember that if you do not turn to the Lord's hand, that has been smiting you, and seek his face, 'his anger is not turned away: his hand is stretched out still.' If you are not thankful for mercies, and do not evince your thankfulness, by turning to him, with all your heart, the Lord may come in his own time, and avenge his quarrel against such a perfidious nation. We own indeed that it is your duty to be thankful for temporal mercies; but what we say is, that you must not rest on *them*, but 'rejoice in Christ.' Now, in order to your rejoicing in him, we would exhort you to take hold of him as he is held out in the word as the Author of your salvation. Take hold of him as your 'righteousness and strength.' It is in the way of thus taking hold of him as offered in the word that you will come to rejoice in him as your ALL IN ALL; and when you are brought to 'rejoice in Christ Jesus,' then all the temporal mercies you meet with will be sanctified to you, you will have them with God's blessing upon them, and in the receipt of them, you will be made to 'go from strength to strength, till you appear before God in Zion.'"

The cause of the Secession continued to make steady progress. In 1745 the number of congregations was so increased that the division of the Associate Presbytery into three separate Presbyteries and the constitution of a Synod became advisable. Unhappily, at the very first meeting of that Synod was introduced an apple of discord in the question, "Whether an oath required of burgesses in some of the boroughs in Scotland, embracing a religious clause, declaring the jurant's 'profession and allowance within his heart of the true religion as presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof,' could be

taken in consistency with their testimony as Seceders?"

Mr. Fisher took a very decided part with those who held that the Oath was, to say the least of it, a *safe* one for Seceders, as, in their apprehension, it merely homologated the profession contained in their testimony to "the true religion," as contained in the standard books of the Church of Scotland, which true religion was, without question as a matter of fact, "professed within the realm of Scotland, and authorized by its laws," without signifying an approbation of every thing in reference to the manner in which legal sanction had, at the Revolution, or at other times, been given to the true religion, and still less of the existing form of the actual profession of that religion in the conduct of the church courts, from which they had found it necessary to secede. Mr. Fisher's own words are—"Every body knows that I look upon the Burgess Oath as lawful, though I am not for imposing my opinion in this matter on any as a term of communion with them."* This was plainly a sentiment which a man might hold with a good conscience: and equally plain is it, that equally conscientious men might, and did, hold that the oath implied a declaration of approbation of the whole manner in which "the true religion" was settled at and since the Revolution, and of the particular laws by which that settlement was guaranteed," in which case, certainly, no enlightened Seceder could take it with a safe conscience, nor indeed without directly contradicting some important points in his testimony. It seems strange to us that neither party had the slightest objection to the oath on the ground on which, now, it would be so generally condemned,—the suspending civil privilege on religious profession.

It is not for us to give a decision in this question.

* Mr. Fisher's letter, p. 30.

The existence of such oaths is a striking manifestation of the mischievous influence which the connexion between church and state diffuses in all directions, identifying it with the system which requires its mark to be impressed on the forehead, or on the hand, to secure peaceable intercourse in the secular affairs of life; and while we should rejoice that this particular stumbling-block has been removed out of the way, that this cause of strife and obstacle to union no longer exists,* we should earnestly pray and strenuously labour that the master evil, of which this was one of the most diminutive indications, may soon be destroyed by the force of truth, so as to put an end to wider, fiercer contentions, and prepare the way for much more extended and influential union.

It is matter of history that "the contention was so sharp" between the equally honest parties who held the above opinions "that they departed asunder one from the other," after having, like Paul and Barnabas, for a number of years, with united hands and hearts, prosecuted the work of their common Master with His obvious benediction, and "with one heart and mouth glorified God even the Father;" and though, like these good men, they did come, ere long, to speak

* It would be improper to pass unnoticed the fact that a grandson of Mr. Fisher, JAMES EWING, Esq., of Strathleven, then occupying a high municipal situation in his native city, by his exertions in the Town Council of Glasgow, and in the Convention of the Scottish boroughs, was honoured to be principally influential in obtaining the suppression of the religious clause in the burgess oaths in which it had a place, and thus removing an important obstacle in the way of the comfortable accomplishment of the union between the two great branches of the Secession, a union happily followed up by a more extensive one—that of the Relief and United Secession churches in the United Presbyterian church. We rejoice to think the tide of Christian sentiment and feeling flows stronger than ever towards a much more extensive union still. Soon may the prayer John xvii. 20—23 be completely answered!

kindly and respectfully of each other, like them too they ceased to "labour together in the work of God," till they joined in his service where they never will be disunited, "before the throne of God," and "in the presence of the Lamb." This deplorable event took place on April 9th, 1747, and led to the division of the Synod, so lately formed, into two bodies, equally claiming its name and rights.*

* "It becomes us to adore the sovereignty of God, and to confess his righteousness in permitting a spirit of contention and division to enter so early, and to prevail so far in the Associate Synod, and to bewail the evils which that spirit produced. It diminished the legitimate influence of their excellent profession, ministrations and character; diverted the attention of their people from the more important concerns of religion, and exhibited an unholy example to the world. If such consequences proved less injurious to the interests of religion than might have been apprehended, or to a certain extent were counteracted by the operation of causes of an opposite nature; or have been balanced, in a considerable degree, by beneficial results, somewhat remote, which could not have been anticipated. we ascribe the glory to God, who, in his infinite wisdom, brings good out of evil, and overrules, for useful purposes, the infirmities and mismanagements of his servants." These are the "weighty words" of a wise and good man, Dr. Stark, in the historical part of the Testimony of the United Secession Church, and embody the thoughts and feelings with which United Presbyterians should always regard this, not one of the brightest, yet certainly one of the most instructive, pages of their history.

CHAPTER IV.

1747—1775.

Mr. Fisher visits Ireland—Is requested by the Synod to prepare for Theological tuition—Synod Sermon, Isa. xxi. 11, 12—Publications on the Burgess' Oath Controversy—Character of them—Explication of the Westminster Shorter Catechism—Appointment to the Professorship, 1749—Mode of conducting the Divinity Hall—Resignation of the Professorship—Obtains a Colleague in the Ministry—Death of Mrs. Fisher—Death of Mr. Fisher—Character—Family—Writings—Conclusion.

Immediately after the breach, Mr. Fisher went to Ireland for a short time, probably for the purpose of giving, what he and his party reckoned, a just account of the late transactions, so deeply involving the interests of the Associate body, that the churches in that country might be enabled to judge of the course which they ought to follow. From a letter addressed to a minister in Ireland, dated Glasgow, Jan. 18th, 1748, it would appear that when in that country he had had communication with some ministers of the General Synod of Ulster, who were dissatisfied with the defections of that body, and had counselled them to adopt a course similar to that which the Seceders had followed in reference to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. A course less decided seems to have been determined on, which did not at all meet Mr. Fisher's approbation, and in this letter he vindicates himself from some misrepresentations. The letter, equally creditable to Mr. Fisher's good sense, liberality, and thorough integrity, will be found in the Appendix.*

* Vide Appendix, No. IV. 3.

At the first meeting of the Synod to which Mr. Fisher belonged, (ordinarily termed the Burgher Synod,) which took place at Stirling in June 1747, he was chosen Moderator. Another and still more distinct proof of the high estimation in which he was held by his brethren, was given him on that occasion. In the room of Mr. Moncrieff, who had seen it his duty to take a prominent part in the controversy against the religious clause in the Burgess oath, and at the division went with the brethren who held his views, it was recommended to Mr. Fisher, whose qualifications as a scholar and divine were well known, to prepare himself for the work of theological tuition, while in the meantime the students were committed to the care of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine.

The Associate brethren had very soon seen the importance of taking measures for training up qualified young men to become candidates for the ministry. So early as 1746, Mr. Wilson had been appointed Professor of Divinity, and on his death Mr. Moncrieff had been chosen to fill the Theological chair. For some time, from a fear, not without grounds, of the hazardous sentiments taught in some of the Scottish universities on moral subjects, they seem to have attempted to obtain for their students the means of instruction in Logic and Ethics, in Mental and Moral Philosophy, as well as in Theology. Mr. David Wilson, afterwards minister of the congregation in Bow-lane, London, (now assembling in Oxendon chapel, Richard Baxter's,) the laborious opponent of Sandeman,—Mr. John Mason, afterwards Dr. Mason of New York, one of the founders of the Associate Reformed Church, and the father of the distinguished Dr. John Mason of the same city, —Mr. Alexander Pirie, afterwards a Congregational minister at Newburgh, author of one of the best defences of infant baptism, and of many other works more ingenious than judicious,—and Mr. John Heugh,

afterwards minister of Stirling, and father of the late lamented Dr. Heugh,—were successively teachers of Philosophy at Abernethy. The Seceders, however, ultimately abandoned this project, and in this they appear to have acted wisely, as it does not seem desirable that a church should undertake more than the theological training of her candidates for the ministry, requiring them to bring to the Theological Seminary as thorough a literary and philosophical education as the universities of the country can afford, and furnishing them, there, with the means of counteracting any evil influences which that previous course of studies may have brought to bear on them.

There is an obvious propriety in every church having the entire control of the theological education of its ministry. It cannot neglect this, nor intrust it to the hands of strangers, without a grievous dereliction of duty, as well as a shameful display of folly. But it is very desirable, on many accounts, that the general education of a country should be national, not sectarian, and that all the youth, to whatever religious denomination they may belong, should receive their elementary, and literary, and scientific education at the same seminaries. To secure this, however, these seminaries must themselves cease to be, what to a considerable extent they now are, even in this country, sectarian in their constitution and administration.

At the opening of the meeting of the Synod at Dunfermline in Sept. 1747, Mr. Fisher, as ex-moderator, delivered an ingenious, appropriate, and impressive sermon on Isa. xxi. 11, 12. "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh as well as the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye; return, come." As this sermon has never been published, and places in a favourable point of view both Mr. Fisher's good sense and good temper, we think it right to give a brief

abstract of it. The preacher turns the attention of his audience, First, to the character of a minister as a watchman, — Secondly, to the question put to the watchman,—and Thirdly, to the watchman's answer. He shows, that the figurative representation of a minister as a watchman, intimates that he occupies an office of trust,—that there is danger from the enemy, —that the power of discernment is necessary in the minister,—that it is also requisite that he be awake and attentive,—that it is his duty to look to the safety of the whole at whatever hazard to himself,—and finally, that he is bound to answer proper questions that may be put to him. The question, repeated, "What of the night?" implies that there is a present night of calamity,—that there are several questions that may be stated by exercised persons respecting this night,—and that there is more than ordinary concern on the spirit concerning the resolution of the question. As symptoms of the night, he notices, the absence of the sun in the withdrawment of God's favour, —and wandering, as in the night, in delusion and error. As to questions which may be asked, he mentions the following: What is the cause of the night? What are the dangers of the night? What is the language of the night? What are the songs of the night? What is the duty of the night? What is the time of night? What is the guard of the night? What are the judgments of the night? The doubling of the question intimates perplexity and doubtfulness,—surprise and deep interest. As to the answer, it is remarked, that after the darkest night of calamity, a morning of deliverance will ensue; that the more suddenly a night of spiritual calamity comes on, it is a sign the morning will break the sooner; that the darker the night has been, the more bright is likely to be the morning; that there is some proportion between the weeping in the night and the joy in the

morning; that the season of the church's, or of individual believer's, comfort, at any one time, in this world, is but of short continuance; that however pleasantly any morning of deliverance may shine, we may lay our account that a night of tribulation is approaching, and, in one word, that God's work of providence, with regard to his church in general, and with regard to believers in particular, is a chequered work, a succession of mornings and nights.

The concluding remarks are very good, and, considering the excited state of men's minds, fully as temperate as might have been expected. "Are ministers watchmen? Then let us who are ministers be diligent in our office, let us 'take heed to ourselves and to the flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers: for we watch for their souls as those who must give account.' As we are watchmen, our work is laborious; but HE 'sends none a warfare on their own charges.' Therefore, in the confidence of his assured presence—'Lo I am with you always to the end of the world,'—let us be 'instant in season and out of season,' 2 Tim. iv. 2. As we are watchmen, we are exposed to storms, bitter storms of calumny and reproach; but 'let us endure hardship like good soldiers of Jesus Christ;' let us follow the example of the glorious head, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. And finally, 'Let our moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand?'"

Mr. Fisher published his views on the controversy which had divided the Associate body in "A Review of a pamphlet entitled a Serious Enquiry into the Burgess Oaths of Edinburgh, Perth, and Glasgow, wherein the most material arguments against the Burgess Oath are impartially weighed and examined," 1748; and in "A Letter to the Burgesses and others of his Congregation who had withdrawn from his Ministry, because he cannot condemn the Burgess Oath, as

a ground of separation and excommunication, nor even admit the sinfulness thereof to be a term of Ministerial or Christian Communion. 1749." Of these tracts it is enough to say, what, according to the aspect in which it is viewed, may be considered either as a compliment or a censure, that as compositions, and manifestations of temper, they are among the least objectionable of the numerous pamphlets of which that unhappy controversy was so prolific. The whole controversy affords an affecting illustration of the judicious remark with which Mr. Fisher commences his "Review." "Division among Christians, even such as profess the same way, seldom fails to breed alienation of affection among them, which frequently breaks forth in judging, reproaching, and reviling one another, whereby the success of the gospel is exceedingly marred, the ends of a testimony for the declarative glory of God, in a great measure frustrated, and the interest of the kingdom of darkness mightily promoted, it being the sport of hell to see the Church, militant against herself, and the enemy becoming triumphant."

There is something touching in the following expostulation with some of the hearers who had deserted him. "As I am to give an account of the ministry which I have received of the Lord, so you are to account for despising and rejecting the same. Let us therefore reason the matter together calmly and in the spirit of meekness. I ask you then, What error in doctrine can you charge me with? What immorality in practice? What principle or opinion have I espoused, which is in any way contrary to the word of God, or our received standards? Since you cannot justly charge me with any of all these, I ask you seriously, How can you answer to God for dissolving the relation betwixt you and me, which was solemnly constituted by free and mutual consent, in the presence of God, angels, and men, at Crosshill, near Glasgow,

October 8th, 1741? Tell me, brethren, what was the reason why you deserted my ministry, without first speaking to myself anent such a momentous step? You know very well that there was not one of you, that ever came to me, to receive light or to be informed, before you had determined to withdraw, or had actually withdrawn, from my ministry. Do not imagine that I am courting you to be my hearers to make a gain of you. The Lord hath hitherto helped me to act such a part, that I am above that calumny."*

It is instructive and humbling to remark the striking difference between the character, literary and moral, of the publications called forth by the controversy between the original Seceders and the Established Church, and of those produced by this unhappy strife among themselves. We can scarcely believe them to be the work of the same minds—the offspring of the same hearts. The feeling produced by reading the first is esteem, often rising to admiration,—that produced by reading the second is deep regret, not unmixed with astonishment and shame. It is not to be forgotten, however, that it was this controversy that so fixed the minds of the Seceders on the connexion between church and state, as to lead them to see, to some extent, the *evils* that were connected with it, whether necessarily or accidentally,—and kept the subject before their minds, till, in the course of a century, the overwhelming majority of them have been led to embrace the doctrine, not merely of the entire distinctness of the church and state, but of the impossibility of the two forms of human society being allied or united without deep injury to both. A pure, active church will make the work of a civil government very easy, and a just civil government will afford facilities for the church serving its own purposes; but to gain these ends, the two societies must

* Letter from Mr. Fisher, pp. 4—6.

be entirely distinct, even though they should be composed of the same individuals.

It is delightful to find that amid the turbulence of controversy, the important purposes of the solid edification of the churches committed to their care were by no means neglected by the Associate ministers in their synodical capacity. At the very first meeting of the Associate (Burgher) Synod, Mr. Fisher, along with Messrs. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, was appointed to carry forward a wise and important plan, which had been under the consideration of the Associate body in its undivided state,—the preparation and publication of an Exposition of that very remarkable composition, the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism,—a work which probably contains, within the shortest compass, the fullest and the clearest exposition of Christian doctrine and law, that is to be found in any language. It was intended that the materials for this "magnum opus" should be furnished by the various Presbyteries. The chief labour, however, in collecting as well as arranging materials, fell on the honoured Erskine Brothers, and their relative, Mr. Fisher.

At the next meeting of Synod, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine reported that he had proceeded in preparing an exposition, as far as the 25th Question, 'On the priesthood of Christ;' but stated, at the same time, that the weight of pastoral engagements, and his increasing infirmities, would put it out of his power to prosecute the work. The Synod requested him to complete his illustration of "the offices of our Lord;" and the remaining part of the Catechism was apportioned into three divisions, for the illustration of one of which each of the Presbyteries of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dunfermline was appointed to furnish materials. It does not appear that much was ever done by them in this; nor if there had, is there any reason to think that the value of the work ultimately produced, would have been increased.

The first part, including Quest. i. to Quest. xxxviii., after receiving the sanction of the Synod, was published at Glasgow in a handsome octavo volume, from the press of Urie, celebrated for its beauty and accuracy, in the year 1753. It is preceded by a Preface, to which are attached the initials E. E., J. F., Ebenezer Erskine, James Fisher. In this preface it is stated, that "the materials of the following Catechism, especially of what was designed for the second part, are [had been] collected by several ministers; and it was [had been] recommended to three of their number to revise what should be done by so many hands, that there might be uniformity of style and method, and that repetitions might be prevented as much as possible. It has pleased the Lord to take home to himself one of the three,* who assisted in composing and revising of this first part; but 'though he be dead he yet speaketh,' and will be spoken of, for his excellent works which have already or may hereafter see the light, by all who shall have any relish or taste for sound doctrine and experimental godliness. Whatever loss the second part of the Catechism may sustain by the removal of such an able and skilful hand, the other two make not the least doubt, but that the Lord would [will] carry on this work, with as great or greater advantage, though they were [should be] laid in the grave likewise."

The second part of the Catechism appeared in a similar handsome volume, from the same press in 1760. In the preface, dated May 12, 1760, and subscribed by Mr. Fisher, it is remarked — "Both these eminent lights, the Rev. Messrs. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, who assisted in composing and revising the first part of this Catechism, are [were] some years ago removed to the upper sanctuary, by death; the first soon after,†

* Mr. Ralph Erskine, who died Nov. 9, 1752.
† Mr. Ebenezer Erskine died June 2d, 1754.

and the second a little before the publishing of it; so that the charge of the second part was [has been], by a renewed recommendation of my brethren, laid upon me. They indeed promised to afford me materials, which some of them did, and I made all the use of them I could, as I did also of the amendments and enlargements proposed by others; but as this performance, such as it is, was never judicially read and approved by any of our judicatories, (though several of my brethren had opportunities to peruse the most part of it, before the whole was cast off,) so any imperfections and weaknesses, that may be found therein, are not to be imputed to the body of ministers, with whom I am, in providence, connected, but to myself only. As to mistakes in divinity, I dare not say there are none, but I may be confident to affirm there were none designed."* It was afterwards repeatedly carefully revised by him, and the edition which may be considered as that to which he put the finishing touch was published at Edinburgh by Gray and Alston in 1772.

This work at once took a high place, and ever since has been reckoned among the first, if not the first, of the Explications of the Shorter Catechism,—a book, the diminutive size and distinguished worth of which were strikingly expressed in the title by which it was long known in Scotland—"The Baw-bee Bible." It is justly remarked by Dr. Mackerrow that "the Associate Synod, in originating such a work, rendered essential service not only to their own church, but to the religious world," and he does not bestow upon it exagge-

* The precise part which the two Erskines had in the preparation of this elaborate work, is thus stated by Dr. Fraser—"The writer happens to possess the original materials for the Catechism prepared in shorthand characters by both brothers. Those written by Ebenezer extend from the viii. to the xxviii. question; those by Ralph, from the lxxvi. to the xcv."—*Life and Diary of Ebenezer Erskine*, p. 494, note.

rated praise when he adds, "I know not if there be, in the English language, a more useful publication, for conveying to the minds both of young and old, clear and Scriptural views of the whole system of revealed truth." The work sometimes goes under the name of the Synod's Catechism, and sometimes under that of Fisher's Catechism. It was long generally used by the ministers of at least one of the divisions of the Secession, as a manual for guiding their congregational catechetical exercises, and also extensively employed by the members of that body for domestic instruction. It has undergone many impressions in this country, in Ireland, and in America, and is still a book in request. We trust that the beautiful edition soon to be put forth as a part of this series of publications, will greatly extend its circulation, and increase its salutary influence throughout the United Presbyterian Church. It has been highly valued in other religious bodies. We have understood that it was a favourite with the late Dr. Colquhoun and Robert Haldane, Esq.

In giving these details in reference to this standard work, we have in some measure infringed on the strict chronological order of the memoir, but it was thought best to present at once whatever information could be furnished, respecting what forms the most permanent foundation of Mr. Fisher's reputation and usefulness as a theological writer. We return to the thread of our narrative.

After having occupied the Theological chair for two years, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine found it necessary to retire in consequence of increasing infirmities; and on the 7th of September, 1749, Mr. Fisher received from his brethren in Synod the highest mark of the estimation in which his talents, acquirements, and character were held by them which they could bestow, by being unanimously appointed successor to the vener-

able Father of the Secession body. For fifteen years Mr. Fisher occupied that most responsible situation, with great credit to himself and advantage to the religious denomination to which he belonged. We have no means of giving a particular account of the manner in which he conducted the Divinity Hall. He seems to have read lectures on the great heads of theological study, and to have prescribed and criticised the course of exercises which with very little variation has been accustomed to be, and we believe still are, performed by students in the various theological seminaries, connected with the different bodies of Presbyterians in Scotland. The annual session lasted for two months, and took place in the earlier part of the year,—varying from February to April. We have been fortunate enough to obtain Mr. Fisher's catalogue of his students, with the list of their exercises and the time when they were delivered, to which, with a few notes on the more remarkable names occurring in the catalogue, we have given a place in the Appendix.*

It appears that about the time of his grand climacteric Mr. Fisher had, as is so common, been visited by an apparent breaking up of the constitution, but after a considerable period of infirm health, he was again restored to such a measure of strength as enabled him to discharge for a number of years the duties of his twofold office.†

* Vide Appendix, No. III.

† "God hath in his holy and kind providence visited you, dear Sir, with signal trials; but has there not been a double mercy attending every single cross? Your kind and merciful Father first gave, before he took away, and so his goodness prevented his rod: and I trust your soul knoweth right well, that your afflictions, personal and relative, now work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in another world, and a great improvement of faith, love, and patience, those precious fruits of the Spirit, while you are at present in the body. Our happiness consists in believing, obeying, and submitting to

In May 1764, Mr. Fisher resigned the Professorship and was succeeded by the Reverend John Swanston of Kinross, who, during the short period of the three years which he occupied the chair, so discharged its duties as to secure the entire approbation of his brethren and the warm affection of his pupils, and to draw forth deep regret at his being "cut off in the midst of his years."* In the course of a few years (in July 1766) Mr. Fisher, though relieved from the labours of the Theological class, found the performance of the multifarious and onerous duties of one of the largest congregations in the denomination in a way satisfactory to himself† a task too severe for his advancing years and decaying energies, and intimated to the Session his conviction of the desirableness, that now that he was in his 70th year he should have a colleague to assist him. Arrangements were made by the congregation and Presbytery for gaining this object, and after some disappointment and delay by unsuccessful calls

the will of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things."—*Letter from Rev. Archd. Hall to the Rev. Mr. Fisher. Christian Monitor*, vol. v. p. 88.

* An octavo volume of elaborate and judicious Sermons, edited by Mr. Smith of Dunfermline, is the memorial of Mr. Swanston as a Minister and Professor. He was the father of Mr. Andrew Swanston, who, from conscientious conviction, left the church of his fathers, joining in succession the Independents and the Baptists. His two posthumous volumes of "Lectures and Sermons" are characterized by excellencies of no common kind. His Theological tutor, Mr. Brown of Haddington, with whom he was a favourite as he was with all who knew him, on hearing of his death, said to a friend, "Well, Andrew has got a church now which will please him." The Rev. Dr. Peddie, whose talents for exposition were so admirable, used to say that "it was Andrew Swanston who first gave him an idea of what an exposition should be." Dr. Lawson of Selkirk, who was his most intimate friend, once said, "I do not believe there ever was so amiable a human being as Andrew Swanston, except Jonathan the son of Saul."

† The number of communicants in April 1769 was 1,200.—*Min. Sess. Shuttle-street Congregation.*

to Mr. Clunie of Dundee and Mr. Fletcher of Bridge-of-Teith, these, much to Mr. Fisher's satisfaction, led to the ordination of Mr. George Henderson, a young man of excellent talents, amiable dispositions, and polished manners, on August 22d, 1771.

Some time before this (in 1768) his daughter Margaret had been married to Mr. Walter Ewing, afterwards better known as Walter Ewing Maclae of Cathkin; and the domestic comfort of the venerable pair in the manse was greatly increased by Mr. and Mrs. Ewing taking up their abode with them. The satisfaction of having got his congregation agreeably settled with a young minister who showed him the most dutiful and affectionate respect, and was quite disposed to "serve with him as a son in the gospel of Christ," was sadly overcast by the sudden removal of his excellent and valued wife, who had now been the companion of his joys and griefs for more than forty-four years. On Saturday, 30th of November, 1771, Mrs. Fisher, after taking dinner in her ordinary health with the family, was seized with cramp in the stomach, and died early in the morning of the succeeding day—the day of the Lord, Dec. 1st. It is easy to conceive, it is impossible to describe, the effect which this event must have had on the mind and heart of a man of such tender and ardent affections. But he had the faith and the hope of the gospel to cast himself on; and he knew, the separation was to be short and the reunion eternal. Whatever the kindness of relatives could do to alleviate his sorrows he abundantly received; for, a singularly affectionate man himself, he had the great happiness of being connected in the closest bonds with persons of similar temperament and character. Mr. Henderson was all that a kind colleague could be, and, though his youngest daughter, Anne, who was very fond of, and very dear to, her aged father, was, in 1773, removed from him by her marriage to Mr. William

Wardlaw, then of Dalkeith, Mr. and Mrs. Ewing, both from their unfeigned piety and great amiableness of character, were well fitted to "rock the cradle of declining age,"—

> "With lenient art extend a father's breath,
> Make languor smile and smooth the bed of death,
> Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
> And keep awhile one parent from the sky."*

Nor were their dutiful cares unrewarded. Mr. Fisher seems to have in a good degree recovered his spirits and activity, and to have enjoyed a green old age. So late as December 1774, we find the Rev. Mr. Smith of Dunfermline, in writing to Mr. Ewing, using the following terms: "My heart rejoices to hear of the surprising stoutness of the honest old man our father. But I hope God is not to put him off with length of days, but that he is looking out for some better portion."†

The days, however, were now near at hand when the last of "the Four Brethren" must "go the way of all the earth," and rejoin his associates. From any information we can glean, his death was the effect rather of the gradual decay of nature, than of any distinctly marked disease. We have no information of his last hours, and we regret a loss which cannot now be supplied. We should have liked to have seen him go down into "the river over which there is no bridge" like the other brethren, "strong in faith giving glory to God." We should have liked to have had some "last words" from a man of so firm a mind, so warm a heart. But as John Newton used to say, "You need

* Pope.

† "Our father preached last Sabbath, and I believe there were not many in the meeting who did not hear him. I have not known him better these several years, though his legs fail him greatly and daily grow weaker."—*Letter from Mr. Ewing to Mr. Wardlaw, 30th June,* 1774.

not tell me how the man died; tell me how he lived, and I can tell you how he died." Such a life as we have so imperfectly sketched could scarcely have any end but one—"PEACE." On the 28th of September, 1775, in the 78th year of his age, and in the 50th year of his ministry, full of years and of honours, JAMES FISHER, the youngest and the last surviving of the Four Associates, who so nobly went to their Master "without the camp bearing *his* reproach," and whom he enabled to make so consistent, steady, and successful a stand for Christian truth and liberty, was gathered to his fathers.*

"He came to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." His death excited general regret, not only in his own congregation and throughout the religious body in the formation and management of which he had taken so active a part, and of which, since Ebenezer Erskine's death, he had been looked up to as the Father, but throughout the city of which he had been so long one of the most honoured citizens and ministers. An aged man of more than fourscore years was but yesterday telling of the testimony given of respect to his memory by a general cessation of business throughout the city during his funeral, and of the crowds that followed his honoured remains to their resting-place, in the New North burying-ground, where he was laid by the side of his faithful spouse, the first occupant of that now populous city of the dead.

From Mr. Fisher not having kept a diary, or from its being lost, it is to be regretted that we have not the

* "My dear Brother,—Your favour I received with the afflicting news of our worthy and dear father's death. He was amiable in his life and amiable in his death. 'Dear in God's sight is the death of his saints.' His memory is dear to many."—*Extract of a letter from Mr. John Gray to Mr. Walter Ewing. Edin., Sept. 29th,* 1775.

same means of becoming acquainted with his inner life as we have with that of his associates. But no careful observer of the leading facts of his history can have any doubts as to the leading features of his character. Clearness was the characteristic quality of his understanding, strict integrity of his conscience, and warm affection of his heart. From unvarying tradition, as well as from written memorials, Mr. Fisher appears to have been, in no common degree, in all the relations of life, estimable, amiable, and accomplished; a good scholar, a well-bred man,* a sincere and devout Christian, a well-read and accurate divine, an instructive impressive preacher, a diligent and affectionate pastor, an able and successful Theological tutor, a public-spirited citizen, a steady and warm-hearted friend; in the general intercourse of society remarkable for the amenity of his manners, a great favourite of the young, and in the bosom of his family an object of the most endeared affection of all its members.† A few letters are inserted in the Appendix which will place some of these traits in a more striking light than any description could. His temper was warm, but under the control of a sound judgment and Christian principle. It is a characteristic trait given by Ralph Erskine in his Diary: "Mr. Fisher had a communing in my room with my colleague Mr. Wardlaw," (who was greatly dissatisfied at the brethren leaving the Church,) "and put him to silence, yet in a very calm way of reasoning."‡

He was distinguished for "opening his hand wide" to the poor and needy. His income was never large,

* Tradition has preserved the following anecdote. On some one complaining to a minister that Mr. Fisher had treated him in an ungentlemanly manner, he replied, "Don't repeat that, Sir, for your own sake; nobody will believe you; Mr. Fisher cannot do an ungentlemanly thing."

† Appendix, No. IV.

‡ Fraser.

his stipend amounting only to £100, and no salary being attached to the Professor's chair; and he had a numerous family;—yet he was liberal to the poor. Tradition tells of its being necessary on the part of his excellent wife to take care that there should not be too much in his pockets when he went out on his visits of mercy, as he was sure to return with them empty.

Of his personal appearance and habits comparatively little information, in an authentic form, has outlived the three-fourths of a century which have passed over his grave. He was somewhat under the middle size, well proportioned,—with a lively, affectionate, cheerful countenance, like David, "ruddy, and withal comely to look on,"—easy and alert in all his movements, —neat in his dress, and orderly and punctual in all his affairs. He was an early riser, and an earlier riser in winter than in summer. He was seldom in bed after four during the winter months, and had his fire prepared over night to be ready to light in the morning—an office he always performed for himself. His study, in which he spent much of his time, looked into his little garden which was immediately behind and a little to the south of the present Greyfriars' Church, and beyond that, on a range of fields and orchards unbroken by buildings, the beautiful prospect terminating in the then verdant heights now covered with palaces. That he was a diligent student, and very conscientious in his preparations for the pulpit, is evident from the shorthand MSS. which he has left behind him. His published sermons seem just a fair specimen of his ordinary preaching. He had a turn for the management of business, and took a leading part in the proceedings of church courts; and while a very decided friend to the rights and liberties of the Christian people, was a zealous upholder of the canon which requires all things in the church to be done "decently and in order."

He appears to have lived on agreeable terms with the pious ministers of the Establishment, at least in his later years. We have seen a note to him from the venerable Dr. Gillies, the friend and biographer of Whitefield, couched in terms not only of respect but of cordial brotherly kindness. It is dated 13th Dec., 1771, long after the heats of the Cambuslang controversy had cooled.

His venerable coadjutor in the labours by which the foundations of his denomination were laid, Mr. Wilson, when playfully comparing his three fellow-workmen and himself with the component parts of the strange "living creature" spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, likened Mr. Fisher to the eagle, alluding probably to his clear glancing eye and graceful bearing, as well as to the perspicacity of his discernment and the force of his character. "Our brother Mr. Erskine," he said, "has the face of a man; our friend Mr. Moncrieff has the face of a lion; our neighbour Mr. Fisher has the face of an eagle; and as for myself, I think you will all allow that I may claim to be the ox, for the laborious part of the business falls to my share."*

Mr. Andrew Swanston, after hearing him when far advanced in life, remarked, that "As to sentiment, composition, and delivery, he had not heard a superior preacher." The late venerable Alexander Shanks of Jedburgh, who has been said to have been formed on the model of the prophets Elijah and Isaiah, used to speak warmly of his high qualifications, and especially of the combined accuracy and fluency with which he expressed himself, not only from the pulpit and chair and in the church court, but on ordinary occasions.

The following hearty testimony of one of his students, more than thirty years after he was laid in his grave, is equally honourable to both parties: "The

* Ferrier's Life of Wilson, p. 357.

Rev. James Fisher was in learning a scholar indeed; he had the politeness of a gentleman and the gravity and conduct of a divine. His discourses were full of sound divinity, delivered in nervous short sentences. He would not weaken his ideas by expanding them, or give you over and over again the same sentiment in other words in the same discourse. He could be concise without obscurity. His discourses might with great propriety have been printed as he preached them. They were equally remote from pedantic bombast on the one hand, and grovelling chitchat on the other. He lived respected, and died in a good old age lamented. Taking him all in all when shall I see his equal?"*

Mr. Fisher had fifteen children, most of whom, however, died in early childhood. How affecting is it to hear the good old man of threescore years and ten saying, "Of fifteen children we have now remaining only four! It is however the Lord's doing, and therefore it becomes us, like Aaron, to hold our peace, or with the Psalmist, to put our hands on our mouths and be silent!"

Of two sons who reached manhood, Ebenezer died in the prime of life in a mercantile situation in 1767, at New Bern, North Carolina; and Ralph, an accomplished and amiable man, who had been successful in business, died at Belfast on his way home from Jamaica, in 1792.

The daughters of the family who came of age inherited their parents' virtues. Jean married her relative, the Rev. James Erskine of Stirling—a most promising young minister—in 1754, whom, after a brief season of happy union, she lost in 1761 only to find again after a still briefer season of sorrowful separa-

* Rogers' Speech before the Associate Synod of Ireland, at Cookstown, July 8th, 1808, pp. 30, 31. The author of this Speech was the first Professor of Divinity to the Associate Burgher Synod of Ireland.

tion, by following him to the grave and to heaven, in 1762.*

Alison was the first wife of the Rev. Robert Campbell of Stirling, one of the greatest pulpit orators ever produced by the Secession, and the object of most cordial affection to Mr. Fisher and his family;—but she died soon after her marriage.

Mary was united to Mr. John Gray, printer in Edinburgh—a man of much Christian worth; but died soon after the birth of her only child, Erskine, who became the wife of the Rev. Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing.†

* Mr. Erskine's note on the death of his son James, Mr. Fisher's namesake, in his domestic register, is affecting: "Yesterday, betwixt twelve and one, P.M., being Saturday, Nov. 15, 1760, my dear dear sweet child Jamie was cut off by the small pox. If he had lived till the 1st of March he would have been three years of age. My heart and affection were much glued to this child. There could not be a more pleasant one. The Lord has dried up this sweet stream. Oh that he may now lead my dear wife and me up to himself the inexhaustible fountain! Oh for right views of God in Christ! Alas, I have not yet won to part with Jamie in my heart and affection."—*Fraser.*

† A short time before her decease she requested that her infant daughter, who had been sent to the country to be nursed, should be brought to her. On the arrival of the child, she sat up upon the bed, and having received the infant on her arms from the hands of her husband, she as it were presented her as an offering to God, and with solemn devotion and cordial affection pronounced on her the Old Testament benediction, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine on thee: the Lord lift up his countenance on thee and give thee peace." The offering, as after events proved, was an acceptable one, and the blessing so solemnly invoked was richly communicated. In this way Mrs. Gray parted with her infant babe. She saw her no more. Soon after she died at the early age of twenty-four, leaving behind her "a good report through faith." "She died in faith," expressing her firm confidence in those "exceeding great and precious promises,"—"being persuaded of them and embracing them,"—"I am the Lord thy God;" "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee."—*Christian Monitor,* vol.

Margaret was the accomplished and excellent wife of Walter Ewing Maclae, Esq. of Cathkin,—around whose hospitable board "the excellent ones of the earth" of all denominations, the Balfours and Lawsons, and Greigs and Peddies, and Dicks and Fullers, and M'Leans and Ewings, gone to the general assembly of the first-born, with a few who still linger behind, were privileged to congregate.

Anne, the youngest of the family, was the second wife of William Wardlaw, Esq., of Glasgow, and the mother of one of the most accomplished theologians, elegant and impressive preachers, enlightened and active philanthropists, and variedly and extensively useful writers of our times, the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw.

The following is a complete list, so far as our information goes, of Mr. Fisher's publications.

1. The Inestimable Value of Divine Truth, considered in a Sermon from Prov. xxiii. 23. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Preached at Finwick, March 3d, 1738. 12mo., pp. 56. Edin. 1739.

2. Christ Jesus the Lord, considered as the inexhaustible Matter of Gospel Preaching, in a Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. James Mair to be Minister of the Associate Congregation at Linton, Tweedale, May 29th, 1746. 12mo., pp. 40. Edin. 1741.

3. A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood, written by the Rev. Mr. James Robe, Minister of Kilsyth; wherein the nature of that extraordinary work, and

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iii., for 1822, pp. 241, 242.—The letters in the Appendix, in reference to Mrs. Gray's last illness, exhibit one of the most beautiful pictures of Christian parental solicitude we have ever contemplated, and illustrate the exquisite propriety and beauty of the Psalmist's comparison, "As a father pitieth his children." The little motherless girl soon to lose her father too, so often referred to in these letters, became, under the fostering care of her two excellent aunts, Mrs. Ewing and Wardlaw, a most accomplished and amiable Christian woman. A memorial of her worth is to be found in the Christian Monitor as above referred to.

the principles of the promoters of it, are discovered from the said Preface and other papers lately published; and likewise the Address to the Brethren of the Associate Presbytery anent their late Act for a Public Fast, is considered. 12mo., pp. 68. Glasgow, 1742.

4. A Review of a Pamphlet entitled 'A Serious Enquiry into the Burgess Oaths of Edinburgh, Perth, and Glasgow;' wherein the most material arguments against the Burgess Oath are impartially weighed and examined. 12mo., pp. 120. Glasgow, 1747.

5. A Letter from Mr. Fisher to the Burgesses and others of his Congregation, who have withdrawn from his Ministry, because he cannot Condemn the Burgess Oath as a ground of Separation and Excommunication; nor even admit the sinfulness thereof to be a term of Ministerial and Christian Communion. 12mo., pp. 32. Glasgow, 1749.

6. A Vindication of Mr. Fisher's Private Missive, published with an answer thereunto, by Mr. How; wherein the errors of Mr. How's Discourse on Prayer are plainly detected, together with an answer to his defence of Clandestine Marriages and Private Baptisms. 8vo., pp. 24. Glasgow, 1751.

7. The Character of a Faithful Minister of Christ, being a Sermon preached immediately after the ordination of Mr. James Erskine as one of the Associate Ministers of the Gospel at Stirling, Jan. 22, 1752. 12mo., pp. 18. Edin., 1752.

8. The Assembly's Shorter Catechism, explained by way of Question and Answer; wherein it is essayed to bring forth the truths of God contained in that excellent composure, more fully than has been attempted in any one of the explicatory Catechisms hitherto published; and, at the same time, as compendiously as the subject would allow; in two parts. I. Of what man is to believe concerning God. II. Of the duty which God requires of man. By some Ministers of the Gospel. Part I. 8vo., pp. 304. Glasgow, 1753.

9. Christ the Sole and Wonderful Doer in the Work of Man's Redemption; an action Sermon preached immediately before dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Associate Congregation, Glasgow, June 23d, 1745: to which is subjoined The Doors of the Heart summoned to open to the King of Glory; an action Sermon preached Aug. 30, 1755. 12mo., pp. 36 and 32. Glasgow, 1755.

10. The Assembly's Shorter Catechism explained by way of Question and Answer. Part II. 8vo., pp. 366. Glasgow, 1760.

Mr. Fisher also wrote a Preface to "Sermons and Discourses upon the most important and interesting

subjects, by the late Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Erskine," in four volumes, 8vo. Edin., 1761; and a Preface giving a short account of the author to "The Sermons and other Practical Works of the late Rev. Mr. Ralph Erskine," in two vols., folio. Glasgow, 1764; and also a short recommendatory Preface to "Two Catechisms mutually connected, by John Brown, minister of the gospel at Haddington." Edin., 1764.

It may be fairly doubted whether any of the founders of the Church of the Secession has exerted a more extended and abiding influence over that community, than the subject of the preceding memoir. His Sermons, though probably freer of faults than the numerous and powerful discourses of his honoured relatives, the Erskine brothers, were by no means, either in their matter or manner, so impressive when delivered, and the few of them which have been published have produced no such effect as these have done; and as the Apologist and Defender of the Secession, though he stood next to, yet he stood far behind Wilson, who was the sole author of the admirable "Defence," and the principal workman in fashioning both the Testimonies. But from the peculiarities of his character, and from the position, both local and official, which he occupied, his influence was probably equal to that of any of them. The congregation which he collected, and to which he gave a character, has, not only under the care of a Henderson, a Pirie, a Dick, and a King, been a powerful agency for good in many ways, but has been the parent, immediately or remotely, of probably not less than thirty congregations, some of them scarcely less numerous and influential than itself. His filling the Divinity chair during fourteen years, put the moulding of the ministry of one branch of the Secession, in a great measure, into his hands, at a most important period of its history, as in the other branch of the Secession a similar plastic influence was exerted by Mr. Moncrieff;

and we trace the results of his example and instructions in the ministerial character and labours of a M'Ewen, and a Brown, and a Patison, and a Kidston, and a Coventry, and a Dick, and a Belfrage, and an Arnot, and a Moir, and a Hall, and a Shanks, and a Campbell, and a Johnstone, and a Henderson, all men of superior talent, and within their various spheres, of powerful and most beneficial influence,—"men," as the son of Sirach says, "honourable in their generations." It is, however, probably chiefly through the medium of "The Westminster Shorter Catechism Explained" that Mr. Fisher has decidedly contributed to fix the character of the theology of the church to which he belonged,—a character which, in its substance, it is to be hoped that church will long retain, uniting, as it does, in so high a degree, the assertion of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, laying a deep foundation for the unhampered preaching of a complete gospel,—the clear exhibition of a full and a free salvation for the guiltiest of the guilty, and the vilest of the vile, of the race of man,—and proclaiming, at the same time, the high claims and unrelaxing obligations of that law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and exceeding broad.

The name of FISHER lives but in his works and in the grateful remembrance of the church,—his only surviving son having died unmarried; but he has a numerous and honoured posterity who, it is to be hoped, will feel and discharge the obligations, as they enjoy the advantages, and sustain the responsibilities, of such an ancestry. There is an exceeding great and precious promise made to the descendants of distinguished servants of God, if they walk in their steps, and "know the God of their fathers, and serve him with a perfect hand and a willing mind;" but there is a threatening of corresponding weight denounced on them, if they follow an opposite course,—"if they seek Him, he will

be found of them; if they forsake Him, he will cast them off for ever."

'All flesh is grass, and all the loveliness thereof as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." "As for man," the best, the greatest, the most amiable, the most useful of men, "As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

"Remember them that have had the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. JESUS CHRIST *is* THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

APPENDIX.

No. I.

MARROW DOCTRINES.

The so-called "Marrow doctrines," reduced to their elements, seem to be these:—'That the gospel is a revelation of the grace of God to man the sinner: That it exhibits, in a divine testimony, the truth respecting Jesus Christ, the divine, divinely appointed, all-accomplished Saviour, and the complete salvation he has procured *for*, and is ready to bestow *on*, sinners of mankind: That it is the immediate duty of every sinner to whom the gospel comes, to believe this testimony: That in the belief of this testimony he cordially embraces this Saviour as his own Saviour, and enjoys the blessings of this salvation as his own: That the finished work of Christ is the sole ground of the sinner's hope of pardon and salvation, and that the truth respecting that finished work, contained in exceeding great and precious promises, cannot be believed without, in the measure in which it is believed, giving peace to the conscience, confidence towards God, and the hope of eternal life: That this faith of the gospel is productive of holiness as well as of hope, and that there is no true holiness, no acceptable obedience any more than solid hope, and genuine comfort, but what springs from the gospel believed.'

These doctrines are equally removed from Neonomianism and Antinomianism, from legalism and licentiousness. I am no advocate for what is peculiar in "the Marrow divines'" mode of stating these truths. I think they may all be fully, clearly stated, without a word about the "deed of gift and grant;" "God being the covenant God, Christ being the Saviour, of the unbelieving sinner" "in the offer;" "the direct and the reflex act of faith;" "the assurance of faith" and "the assurance of sense," as indicative of two kinds *of*, or two sorts of evidence *for*, the assured hope of personal salvation;—"appropriation being of the essence of faith," &c. Much important truth is

couched under these terms; but it may be doubted how far they are fitted clearly to unfold it. I object on higher grounds than those of mere taste to much of the phraseology of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," though what is most offensive in it is borrowed from the Reformers, especially from Luther. I could not express anything like an entire satisfaction with the view that work gives of the *rationale* of the divine economy of salvation, nor with its tripartite division of the law of works, the law of faith, and the law of Christ.

But I not only hold that the principles above stated are the essential elements of a pure and a full gospel,—that the Marrow-men did good service to the cause of truth and holiness,—and that a clear exhibition of those principles is the most valuable characteristic of what may be termed Secession theology,—but that such books as "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," and "Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification," while unduly artificial in their form, exhibit the great principles stated above, in a way well fitted to stir the mind of the reflecting student, and if they but throw him back on the Bible, to which they are constantly making their appeal, are likely, in a higher degree than many works of higher pretensions, to lead into those comprehensive, consistent views of the plan of salvation as embracing the conjoint attainment of an entire change of state and thorough transformation of character, by the same means, both procuring and instrumental, and of the gospel as when believed being equally the ministration of righteousness and the Spirit, of justification and hope, and of sanctification and comfort, which are of so much importance both to the right regulation of individual Christian inward exercise, and to the clear and satisfactory exhibition of "the truth as it is Jesus," in all its fulness and self-consistency, to others.

Those who wish to understand the whole subject would do well to read The Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Boston's Notes, Boston's Memoirs, Brown's Gospel Truth, M'Crie's Account of the Controversy respecting the Marrow of Modern Divinity—Christian Instructor, vol. xxx., p. 693, &c., M'Kerrow's History of the Secession, Fraser's Lives of the Erskines, Thomson's Historical Sketch, Dr. Harper's Life of Ebenezer Erskine. He who carefully examines the subject will not think Mr. Fisher has exaggerated the importance of this controversy when, in his biographical preface to Ralph Erskine's works, he pronounces it "the most useful and beneficial to this church of any other that has been broached since the beginning of this century."—Vol. i. p. xi.

No. II.

BRIEF NOTES RESPECTING MRS. FISHER.

Mrs. Fisher was the eldest daughter of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine and Mrs. Alison Turpie, and was born about the year 1706. There are two or three rather interesting notices of her in her venerable father's diary. In August 1714, she, a girl of eight years of age, when on a visit at Kirkcaldy, was seized with fever. Her father, but lately himself recovered from fever, thus records his feelings: "I got word yesterday that my daughter Jean is lying in a fever in Kirkcaldy. The Lord be gracious when I desire to give her to the Lord, and, according to his command, to bring her to him who, I hope, is my God, and who will also, according to his promise, be the God of my seed. Christ's condescension towards the nobleman of Capernaum, who entreated him on behalf of his child that was dying, furnished me with an argument on behalf of my little daughter. He has a regard to the poor as well as the rich and noble; and therefore I may go to him for my child as well as this man did, for he is as willing and ready to help now as he was then. This gave me encouragement to pray that the Lord Jesus would heal her soul; that he would lay his hand on her and bless her; that he would break in upon her heart and sanctify this affliction; that if it were his will he would spare her; and that if she died he would take her to himself. Blessed be his name, who allows me to plead on her behalf, and helps in some measure to believe that he will hear." The affectionate parent's prayers were graciously heard, and in a few weeks she was able to return to Portmoak. On Sept. 22, when she was returning with her parents from Kirkcaldy, as she rode near them before a servant on a small pony, the pony stumbled and fell, on the road between Kirkness and Portmoak, "so that both the lad and the child tumbled over the ears of the beast," and yet neither of them received the least hurt. "I ascribe this," says the pious and affectionate father, "to my great, glorious, and good God, who gives his angels charge over me and mine, to keep us in all our ways. On coming home I set up my Ebenezer."

After the death of his wife, in 1720, when Jean was a girl of 14, we find Mr. E. thus touchingly speaking both of mother and daughter: "Most sweet and comfortable were her advices to her dear children, particularly to Jeanie, who waited well and dutifully on her during her long trouble and distress, which binds my heart exceedingly to that child, especially because her mother

had a strong affection for her."—*Fraser's Life and Diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine*, pp. 280, 281, 156, 157, 290.

Jeanie seems to have been a general favourite. She was the object of peculiar affection on the part of her kind-hearted uncle Ralph. The following letter was written some time before her marriage:—

"*Dumfermline, 3d Nov.*, 1726.

"ENDEARED NIECE,

"This comes to let you know that I am very desirous to understand your welfare, and know how your affairs are going, or what length that important business is come which was the subject of our communing here, and of my last line to you, and wherein I am still of the same sentiments which I then expressed. Hoping that your falling in with the call of Providence therein in a cordial manner, may be a yielding to the will of the Lord manifested in his providence and suitable to his word, and that it may tend to his glory and your comfort and advantage every way, which, if my heart deceives me not, I incline earnestly to desire of the Lord in your behalf. . . . Wishing also, that you may be under a gracious divine conduct, ordering your lot in this world most advantageously, and making way for your happy state in the other world, I rest . . ."

Her uncle gave still farther proof of his interest in her by officiating at the marriage, and by the following excellent letter sent to his niece some time afterwards:—

"*Portmoak, 4th January*, 1728.

"MY DEAR NIECE JEANIE,

"I am sorry we have so seldom any communication with you now that you are situated in your married lot at a little farther distance from us than formerly. Though at the same time, notwithstanding that I hear seldom from you, I am satisfied to think that in Providence you are privileged with good company, and in comfortable circumstances outwardly, in many respects even your external prosperity being what I would ardently wish and desire, so far as is consistent with God's glory and your good; for an absolute exemption from all crosses and trials in this world could not be contributive to either of these ends, according to the ordinary stated method of Heaven, especially towards the children of grace, and consequently is not to be wished for. And therefore, though the Lord hath mercifully provided and ordered matters, (I hope,) very commodiously for you in a suitableness to your station, and blessed you with a kind husband, as well as a gospel minister, in one and the same person, a competent living, a convenient dwelling-

place, and many comfortable accommodations, *which ought to excite gratitude and thankfulness;* yet, as I hope you will never look upon any outward temporal enjoyments as your best and chief treasure, nor consequently give *them* the room which glorious Christ *alone* should have, so I shall wish you may be helped of grace to such a joyful and yet spiritual regular use of all *outward* mercies and comforts as may be consistent with a readiness to be divorced from them, whenever the Lord shall show that the time he gave them in loan to you is expired;—for when Providence says in effect of any worldly comforts we may enjoy, as was said of the ass and her colt, Matt. xxi. 2, 3. 'The Lord hath need of them,' then he expects that straightway we will send them. While they are tied, and he sees them needful for us, we are allowed thankfully and comfortably to use them; but when he seeks them to be loosed, and sees them needful for the ends of his glory and our good to be surrendered to him, then we ought, with humble submission and contentment, to part with them at his call. I desire to hope that the divine blessing upon the good example and excellent education that you was privileged with in your father's family all along, to which I charitably presume that saving and effectual divine teaching and instruction have been mercifully superadded, will make that deportment which I have hinted at to be natural, easy, and pleasant to you, or at least excite you to such an endeavour after it as will be agreeable to those that are about you, and adorning to the Christian profession and gospel character, to which the more conformed you are, the more will you show yourself a kind and loving wife to your husband, a wise and virtuous housewife to your family, and a pattern of discretion and civility to all your neighbours, as well as a serious seeker of, and a faithful servant to, the Lord your God, not only as he is your father's God, and your mother's God, which you have ground to say, but especially as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious object of our faith and love. If any good advices are deducible from what is above said, I hope my former familiarity with you as a friend and relative shall not make my present liberty and freedom with you as a Christian adviser the less acceptable, but rather the more, since the former hath given me the better opportunity for the latter. But, as I do not in the least suspect your kindly accepting of the freedom I use this way, even though there were no such inducement thereto, so it will be always desirable and refreshful unto me to hear and understand that, under the influence of heavenly instruction and conduct, you are helped to outdo the advice of your best friends upon earth. I shall also be glad to hear that you enjoy the fruits of God's common providence with his special blessing, which alone maketh truly rich, and addeth no sorrow in the

issue. After what I have here seriously delivered, I shall allow the enclosed diversion from my daughter. My wife gives her kind service to you and Mr. Fisher. I am,

Your very affectionate Uncle,
And humble Servant,
Ralph Erskine."

Our readers will not be displeased to have an opportunity of perusing the "enclosed diversion," which certainly shows that the first Seceders were not the morose generation they are often supposed to have been.

"*A letter written by Margaret Erskine,* daughter to the late Rev. Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, to her cousin, Mrs. Fisher of Kinclaven.*

"Dear Cousin, this may let you know
That I am well and wish you so.
Glad should I be, could I hear tell
By word or writ, that you are well:
For now you're gone so far away,
A-*fishing* up the river Tay,
I know not if it be the Highlands,
Or north among the Pearl Islands;
Be where it will, by land or sea,
You're in a manner dead to me.
For many long months in the year
No single word from you I hear,
By common post, nor common chance,
No more than if you were in France.
Nay, we have here, who dwell at Forth,
So little converse with the North,
Perhaps it would not be in vain
For me to wish you were in Spain,
That I might hear when climates alter,
As oft from you as from Gibraltar.
But now, when we're so far asunder,
I think it needs be no great wonder,
Though I in writing at this time,
Would fain cheer up myself with rhyme;
While grieved to think I am bereft
Of you, dear Coz, e'er since you left
The good old loch and water Leven,
For these wild moors about Kinclaven.
I also thought some merry chat
When you're in such a place as that,

* Afterwards wife of Mr. John Newlands, Merchant, Glasgow.

To speak of it without aspersion,
Would meet your need of some diversion.
Pray, do not think that I am rude,
I would not be misunderstood;
I speak in case of your dejection,
And don't intend to cast reflection;
The thing at present in my view,
Is to divert myself and you;
To which I am the more inclined,
While thinking you are now confined
Unto a spot that wants the vogue
Of old Dunfermline or Portmoak.
If herein I mistake, I beg
Excuse your little cousin Meg.
And I'll take care, the next I send you,
If I hear tell that this offend you.
I do not think your soil is such
That I need pity you too much,
For as I hear by common clatter
You want for neither wood nor water;
You have, they say, a goodly manse,
And that upon a pleasant stance;
You have a river at your hand,
A FISHER also at command;
You want not peats, as I am told,
To warm your feet in winter cold.
Only I hear you're scarce of coals,
And burn your peats among your soles.
Well, since you would needs be a wife.
So far without the bounds of Fife,
And trace the Fisher's hook when harling
Your feet so far from warm Dunfermline.
'Tis well bestowed upon you now,
That you want coals and chimneys too,
And burn your toes with Norland commons,
Because you left the lofty Lomonds.
But yet I hear you are not scant
Of other things that here we want.
Although you have not gentle lairds,
Nor good stone-dyke about your yards,
Nor deep coal pits, nor good stone quarries,
Nor other Southland necessaries;
Yet you have many things, I hear,
Instead of our South country gear;
Instead of stone dykes, you have fail;
Instead of coffee, you have kail;

Instead of spring-wells, you have floods;
Instead of orchards, you have woods;
Instead of pastry, you have plants;
Instead of music, Highland rants;
Instead of pinners, you have plaids;
Instead of coaches, you have sleds;
Instead of gentles, you have jockeys;
Instead of ladies, you have luckies;
Instead of meadows, you have moors;
Instead of chimneys, you have floors;
Instead of houses, you have huts;
Instead of apples, you have nuts;
Which brings your promise to my mind,
And makes me think you are not kind;
You said, (but now I find you're slack,)
That you would send me nuts to crack;
Mind then, or else I'll say in anger,
That out of sight and out of languor
'Twas your neglect, for which I'm sorry,
Made this digression to my story.
But to return,—without more fash
I'll tell you what they farther clash;
I am informed by country chat,
Instead of this thing, you have that;
Old ruined walls instead of castles;
And huts instead of Dinnibirsels,*
Brown heather cowes instead of clavers;
And bonnets blue instead of beavers;
Well toasted snuff instead of musk;
Plain dress instead of gentle busk;
In many things you thus excel
The people in the South that dwell.
The busk among your country lasses,
By far our gaudy garb surpasses.
Perhaps in practice I may err,
Yet in my judgment I prefer
Your good blue laces, hoods and loops,
To filthy flaring girds and hoops.
But over and above all this,
You have rare things that here we miss.
Your water doth afford you pearls
Such as are worn by Dukes and Earls;
And having store of pearl-fish,
You do not want the richest dish.

* Donnabirstle—the seat of the Earl of Moray in Fifeshire.

Yet without jesting, to be grave,
You want for nothing that you have.
But while I mention all the rest,
I had almost forgot the best;
For you have also something else
That's rarer yet, as rumour tells
Hard by your kirks your woods have bells,
To conjure fairies down like spells;
For if I trust what people say,
The Pope of Rome did once a-day
Such bells with holy water sprinkle,
To banish bogles with a tinkle;
As good as beads and Ave-Maries,
To fright and drive away the fairies.
I hear the bell by you possess'd
Was consecrated with the rest.
You therefore, having such a thing,
What have you more ado but ring,
Then off scours every hurtful elf,
That you may safe enjoy yourself.
Dear Cousin, it may well content you,
If all the word be true I've sent you.
But lest my lines your patience weary,
Which hope to find or make you cheery,
I send my love to Mr. FISHER,
And rest your hearty welfare wisher,

MARGARET ERSKINE.

Mrs. Fisher appears to have been a woman of superior mind, affectionate heart, and pleasing manners,—distinguished for her prudence and activity, and every way fitted to be a help-meet for her husband as a Christian minister. Like her husband she seems to have been formed for society, and evidence yet exists of the familiar terms on which, when at Kinclaven, she associated with the first families in the neighbourhood.

Mrs. Fisher had the melancholy satisfaction of watching the last hours of her venerable father. "During the night," says Dr. Fraser, "on which he finished his earthly career, Mrs. Fisher having come from Glasgow to visit her dying father, was sitting in the apartment where he lay and engaged in reading: awakening from a slumber he said, 'What book is that, my dear, that you are reading?' 'It is your sermon, father,' she replied, 'on that text, *I am the Lord thy God.*' 'O woman,' said he then, 'that is the best sermon ever I preached.' The discourse had proved very refreshing to himself as well as to many of his hearers. A few minutes after that expression had fallen from his

lips, he requested his daughter to bring the table and candle near his bed; and having shut his eyes, laid his hand under his cheek, he quietly breathed out his soul into the hands of the Lord his God, who had redeemed him."

The following letters exhibit her character in a very amiable light:—

TO MRS. SCOTT, GATESCHAW.

"VERY DEAR SISTER,

"This day I received yours. Your niece, Mrs. Erskine,* is in all appearance dying of what is called a galloping consumption. She is much in the same way her husband was. It is but five weeks since we thought her in any danger, although she has been very much sunk in spirit since Mr. Erskine's death. She has had two doctors waiting upon her all along; but now I find they have no hopes of her recovery, so that in all appearance the next accounts you will have will be her death, for she is now very low. We have need of your sympathy. The Lord sees meet to break us with breach upon breach; but who can quarrel him for doing what he will with his own? Oh to have that 'perfect love that casteth out fear,' and putteth a good construction upon all his dealings towards us, and to say, 'Although he slay us, yet we will trust in him.' But, alas! faith, love, hope, and patience, are all weak; so that I cannot say to this or the other mountain, 'Be ye removed.' It would be very comfortable to all of us to see you in this place, for I am not now able to come to see you. Our son Ralph is doing very well in the merchant way. We had a letter from Eben about ten days ago. He is very well. Mr. Fisher and the rest of the family are well. Also our grandchild Ralph; so that we have reason to sing of mercy even in judgment. I am in haste, with compliments to Mr. Scot and my nephews.

Your very affectionate Sister,

JEAN ERSKINE.

"*Glasgow, April the 30th*, 1762."

TO MRS. GRAY, NEAR THE FOOT OF FOSTER'S WYND, EDINBURGH.

"*Glasgow, 21st Nov.*, 1764.

"MY VERY DEAR MARY,

"It is comfortable to your Papa and me to hear that you now have your health better. I entreat you to take care of

* Mrs. Fisher's eldest daughter.

yourself now, and do nothing that may cause you to lose it again. Health is very precious, and we would give a great deal sometimes for it when we cannot obtain it. Mr. Campbell will acquaint you that Mr. Pagan died Friday last, and was buried yesterday, to the great grief of that family. He was an honest-hearted fine youth. Lady William-wood died Sabbath last, and is interred this day. She wanted several months of David Pagan's age. To be sure, the language of these dispensations of Providence is, 'Be ye also ready.' Oh! Mary, this is a vain world; much of the vanity of it have I seen; I have met with disappointments from every quarter where I wanted to turn my eyes for rest. They have, indeed, proved an Egyptian reed that has pierced me when leaning on them. I would, therefore, now fain be at saying, 'Return to thy rest, O my soul,' even to God as in Christ, as thy only portion. And what a mercy is it, that there is room in his covenant, even for backsliding children, and for those that have played the harlot with many lovers!

"My kind love to Mr. Gray and Peggie, in which we all join.

My dear Mary,

Your affectionate Mamma,

JEAN ERSKINE."

TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow*, 12*th March*, 1765.

"MY VERY DEAR MARY,

"I received yours, and rejoice to hear you are still continuing better. My dear Ralph is now gone, and after all that passed, it is now a great trial to me, as I scarcely expect ever to see him again, and what adds to our grief, we have not had a scrape of a pen from Eben for nigh these two years, so that, after all my toil and labour, I am now bereaved of my two sons. But I have reason to be dumb with silence, saying, 'It is my own iniquities that correct me,' and not to complain too much, so long as your Papa is spared with us. But I know not what farther trials and bitter ingredients may yet be in my lot. The swimming in your Papa's head returned to him last Saturday; he is in bed with it when I am writing you, but I would fain hope it will not continue.

"We all join in our endeared love to you, Mr. Gray, and Peggie.

My dear,

Your very affectionate Mamma,

JEAN ERSKINE."

TO THE SAME.

"My dear dear Mary,

"I am glad to hear you are no worse than when I came from Edinburgh. I had a very sore heart to part with you; but I thought circumstances both in your family and my own did not answer for my staying longer, especially as I thought you somewhat better; but if I could divide my body as well as my affections, there would still be a part of me with you:—but it is our mercy that the Lord is a God far off as well as at hand. May a gracious God be your support in the furnace of affliction, and bring you out of it in due time! I have sent a bit of cloth for a frock to dear Erskine.

"Farewell, my dear Mary. Lord grant good accounts of your recovery. My kind love to you, Mr. Gray, and Miss Beugo, to whom all of us stand greatly indebted.

My dear,

Your very affectionate sympathizing Mamma,

Jean Erskine.

Glasgow, Sept. 13th, 1766."

TO MRS. SCOTT, GATESHAW.

"My dear Sister,

"I intended to have wrote you before this time, but I have such a feebleness both of body and mind that every thing is a burden to me. I received yours when at Stirling the 25th of last month, that very day my dear Alie* was interred. She died on the 22d ——. The death of my dear child cannot but open my wound afresh in a very sensible manner.† I think my name is like to be Marah. I came out to the world with a large family, and I am afraid I shall return empty even before I go to the grave. But what a mercy has it been to us who are the parents, that although we survive the most of our children, we have had great comfort in them both in life and at death. I see you have heard what happened to our grandchild.‡ Poor man! he was a great trial to his grandfather and me: but nobody knows what sovereign grace may have done even in his last moments. For all the children we have lost, I never saw Mr.

* Her daughter, Mrs. Campbell.

† Referring to the death of her daughter, Mrs. Erskine.

‡ He was lost at sea. This was Mr. James Erskine's only surviving son.—*Fraser's Life of Ralph Erskine*, p. 527.

Fisher in the manner, as on receiving the news of Ralph's death; —he burst out into tears, which was very affecting. Oh to hear the language of these many rods, and that the Lord would show me why he contendeth with me; for I cannot win yet to "rejoice in tribulation!" May God himself bring me to that frame of mind! Mr. Fisher is turned very frail. Last year, for some months about this time, he was so bad with a violent cough and defluxion that no life was expected. He has been somewhat better this season, but still he has a bad cough. The Lord is pleased still to keep the rod over our head. Peggie is very happily married to a sober well-disposed young man in this place. His name is Walter Ewing. This is somewhat comfortable to us who are the parents, now in old age, amidst so many afflicting providences. Dear Sister, it seems you think I have little of the Christian that would cherish anger at any person, especially at a sister, for such a long time. I was indeed somewhat fretted at your last letter to me, but I thought that answering in the same way was but widening the difference, therefore I forbore. I have got some other things to mind than petty quarrels. We are so many years nearer the eternal world, therefore "let us walk in love" towards one another, as an evidence that we are beloved of God. Farewell, my dear Sister. Make my own and Mr. Fisher's compliments to Mr. Scott and your two sons.

I am, my dear Sister,
Your affectionate and afflicted Sister,
JEAN ERSKINE.

"*Glasgow, February 9th, (apparently,)* 1770."

Mrs. Fisher died December 1st, 1771.

On the taking down the Parish Church of Kinclaven, in order to its being rebuilt, in the summer of 1848, a somewhat remarkable discovery was made. The stair to the pulpit consisted of a flight of stone steps. On removing the uppermost of these steps, there was found engraved on its under-side, the following singular inscription:—

MR. JAMES FISHER,
MINISTER AT KINCLAVEN,
1740.
BY HIS SPOUSE, JEAN ERSKINE.*
"THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST."

* Information furnished by Rev. Mr. Young of Kinclaven.

It is difficult to say what induced Mrs. Fisher to place so singular a monument in such a situation. It probably refers to, what she must have considered as, 'the ecclesiastical putting to death' of her husband as a witness for Christ—his deposition by the General Assembly,—and expresses her faith that *such* a death would be followed by an *early* resurrection. It is a curious coincidence, that after being concealed for more than a hundred years, this memorial of Mrs. Fisher's affection for her husband, and faith in his Master, should come to light just when an attempt to do tardy justice to Mr. Fisher's memory was about to be made in this Memoir, and his literary remains about to undergo a resurrection.

No. III.

MR. FISHER'S REGISTER OF THE DIVINITY HALL, 1750—1763, WITH NOTES.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, FEBRUARY 1750.

		Time of Delivery.
James Robertson,	Exeg. An Redemptio Secundùm Impetrationem ejusdem sit Latitudinis cum Applicatione?	March 1.
	Hom. 1 Cor. i. 30. "Who of God is made unto us——sanctification." .	March 8.
David Forrest,*	Exeg. An Alicui nisi Deo et Conscientiæ Rationem Opinionum Nostrarum circa Religionem, reddere teneamur, dummodo quietè in Civili Societate nosmet gesserimus?	March 3.
	Hom. Isa. xxxiii. 6. "And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times,"	March 15.
James Erskine,†	Exeg. An Sacrificia Lumini Naturali Originem suam debeant? . . .	March 8.
	Hom. Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief,"	March 1.
	Lecture on Isa. 12th chap., ...	{Thursd. April 19.

* Afterwards minister at Inverkeithing. He was a violent opponent of Mr. Campbell's settlement at Stirling, and left the denomination before his death. An account of his life was published.

† Son of the Rev. Ralph Erskine, afterwards colleague to his uncle Ebenezer in Stirling, and son-in-law to Mr. Fisher.—*Vide Fraser's Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine*, pp. 524—527.

		Time of Delivery.
John Brown, *	Exeg. An istiusmodi Adminicula data sint Ethnicis, quæ ex se ad aliquem Gradum Notitiæ salutaris ducant, quamvis Verbo Scripto destituantur?	March 17.
	Hom. Gen. iii. 22. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become like one of us, to know good and evil," .	March 22.
Daniel Cock, †	Exeg. An Theologia Naturalis et Supernaturalis, Gradu tantummodo, aut etiam Specie, differant?	March 10.
	Hom. John xv. 3. "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you,"	March 29.
WilliamM'Ewen,‡	Ex. Num Doctrinæ Trinitatis et Deitatis Christi sint Veritates Fundamentales?	March 15.
	Hom. Jer. xvii. 12. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary,"	March 29.
John Thomson, §	Exeg. An Jus Dominii divini in Creaturas rationales fundetur in Creatione? .	March 22.
	Hom. Matt. iii. 8. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," .	March 31.
John Patison, ‖	Exeg. An Intentio promovendi aliorum Fælicitatem, sit Tessera Actionis Moraliter bonæ?	March 24.
	Hom. Rev. xix. 13. "His name is called The Word of God,"	March 31.

* Afterwards minister of Haddington, and successor to Mr. Swanston as Professor of Divinity, author of the Self-Interpreting Bible, the Dictionary of the Bible, and many other works. It is intended that a new edition of his Select Remains, which have been very popular and long out of print, shall form a part of this series of publications. Mr. Brown commenced his theological studies under the superintendence of Ebenezer Erskine.

† Afterwards minister of Crawfordsdyke, Greenock, and Synod Clerk. He went to America.

‡ Afterwards minister of Dundee—a man of fine genius and elegant taste. He died young. His Sermon "On the Matter and End of Gospel Preaching," at the ordination of Mr. Dick, the father of the late Dr. Dick of Aberdeen, which passed through several editions, is a first-rate discourse: and his work on the Types, and his Essays, though posthumous, have great merit. Mr. M'Ewan was also one of Ebenezer Erskine's students. The venerable Dr. Erskine speaks of Mr. M'Ewen in the following terms: "Hervey of the Church of England, and M'Ewen of the Secession, are agreeable writers; but to attempt their manner is dangerous, without an uncommonly lively imagination, solid judgment, and correct taste. Luxuriances of style, generally overlooked in original geniuses, appear ridiculous in their servile imitators."—*Discourses*, vol. i. p. 58.

§ He settled for some time in Ireland, and then returning to Scotland was for some time minister of Kirkintilloch. In consequence of losing his voice he retired from the ministry, but took an active part against the Synod in the Old Light controversy in 1797–8, &c.

‖ First Burgher minister in Edinburgh—a man highly esteemed among his brethren. The author of an able historical defence of the Secession in a preface to the first edition of M'Ewen's Essays, addressed to John Earl of Glasgow the Right Honourable Lord Commissioner.

		Time of Delivery.
James Wylie,*	Exeg. An ex Vocatione Discipulorum rudium et illiteratorum, Sequatur tales hodie ad Prædicationem Evangelii admittendos?	
	Hom. Hosea vii. 8. "Ephraim is a cake not turned,"	
John Brakenridge,		

DISPUTATIONES MENSE MARTIO, AN. 1750.

RESPONDENTES.	OPPONENTES.	*Tempus Disput. Die.*
Jacob. Robertson, David Forrest,	Daniel Cock, Gulielmus M'Ewen, Joannes Thomson, Joannes Patison,	Martii 3tio.
Jacobus Erskine, Daniel Cock,	David Forrest, Gulielmus M'Ewen, Jacobus Robertson, Jacobus Erskine,	Martii 10mo.
Gul. M'Ewen, Joannes Brown,	Jacobus Wylie, Joannes Thomson,	Martii 17mo.
Joann. Thomson, Joannes Patison,	David Forrest, Joannes Patison, Jacobus Robertson, Jacobus Erskine,	Martii 24to.
Jacobus Wylie,	Daniel Cock, Gulielmus M'Ewen.	

DISPUTATIONES, ANNO 1751.

RESPONDENTES.	OPPONENTES.	*Tempus Disput.*
Gulielmus Gib,	David Forrest, Jacobus Wylie,	Martii 8vo.
Joann. Anderson,	Gulielmus M'Ewen, Robertus Leny,	Martii 9no.
Guliel. Kidston,†	Gulielmus Gib, Joannes Anderson,	Martii 15to.
Robertus Leny,	Gulielmus Kidston, Gulielmus Knox,	Martii 16to.
Gulielmus Knox,	Joannes Thomson, Gul. M'Ewen,	Martii 22do.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, 1751.

		Time of Delivery.
John Thomson,	Exercise and addition on 1 John v. 6. "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ," &c. . .	Feby. 26. March 5.
	Lecture on Isa. lxiii. from the beginning to the 6th verse, ...	Feby. 15.
John Patison,	Exercise and addition on 1 John v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven," &c., ...	Feby. 15. Feby. 19.
	Lecture on Rom. v. from the 17th verse to the close of the chapter, . . .	March 5.

* Afterwards minister of Scone. He was understood to be a good Hebrew scholar.

† Afterwards minister of Stow, Tweedale—a man of a strong mind, and an able, diligent, faithful minister. He stood high in the esteem of Mr. Brown of Haddington and Dr. Lawson of Selkirk. He was the father of the venerable William Kidston, D.D., Glasgow, now the Father of the United Presbyterian Church.

		Time of Delivery.
William M'Ewen,	Exercise and addition on 1 John v. 8. "And there are three that bear witness in earth,"	Feby. 19. Feby. 26.
	Lecture on Phil. ii. from the 6th to the 12th verse.	Feby. 15.
William Gib,	Exeg. An Fides sit Conditio Fœderis Gratiæ?	March 8.
	Popular Sermon on Isa. xlix. 3. "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified,"	March 29.
John Anderson,	Exeg. An præter Scientiam Naturalem et liberam detur in Deo Scientia quædam Media?	March 8.
	Homily on 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son hath life,"	March 29.
William Knox,	Exeg. An Deus sit omnipræsens Secundum Essentiam?	March 22.
David Forrest,	Exercise and addition on 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: He that believeth not God hath made him," &c.	
	Lecture on Col. iii. 1, 2, 3 and 4 verses.	
James Wylie,	Exercise and addition on 1 John v. 14. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us."	
	Lecture on Titus ii. 11, 12, 13 and 14 verses.	
William Kidston,	Exeg. An Justitia Vindicatrix sit Deo Naturalis?	
Robert Leny,	Exeg. An Summum Bonum alicubi, nisi in ipso Deo reconciliato, positum sit?	

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, TO BE DELIVERED FEBRUARY 1752.

John Patison,	Pop. Serm. John iii. 34. "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him,"	Feby. 21.
William Gib,	Exer. and add. John xv. 9. "As the Father hath loved me so have I loved you; continue ye in my love,"	March 3.
	Lect. John xvi. 12, 13, 14, 15. "I have yet many things to say unto you," &c.	Feby. 18.
John Anderson,	Exer. and add. John xvi. 7. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away," &c. . . .	Feby. 18.
	Lect. Acts iii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins," &c., ...	Feby. 27.

		Time of Delivery.
Wm. Knox, Irel.,	Hom. Mat. v. 20. "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," . .	Feby. 7.
	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. i. 19. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed," &c., ...	Feby. 27.
William Kidston,	Hom. 1 Cor. iii. 17. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy," &c., ...	Feby. 14.
	Lect. 2 Cor. vi. 8, last clause, 9, 10. "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown," &c., ...	Feby. 21.
Robert Leny,	Hom. Mat. ix. 12. "When Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole," &c., ...	Feby. 21.
	Lect. Mat. vi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father," &c., ...	March 6.
Geo. Coventry,*	Exeg. An jus Regiminis civilis, in Populi Majorum Electione, aut Successione hereditaria, positum sit?	Feby. 7.
	Hom. Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,"	March 3.
Jno. M'Alaw, Irel.,	Exeg. An Voluntas primi Adami ante Lapsum, ad Malum æque ac Bonum libera fuerit?	Feby. 14.
	Hom. Luke xiii. 5. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," . . .	March 6.
David Smith,†	Exeg. An Anima Humana sit immaterialis?	March 3.
Wm. Ronaldson,	Hom. Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"	March 9.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1752.

Thesis 1ma. Jus Regiminis Civilis in Populi Majorum Electione positum est.—Geo. Coventry, Respondens; Robertus Leny et Joannes M'Alaw, Opponentes, ...	Febr. 14.
Thesis 2da. Voluntas primi Adami ante Lapsum ad Bonum tantummodo libera fuit, quamvis fallibilis erat Adamus.	

* Afterwards minister of Stichell,—a man of singular amiableness. Notices of him are to be found in Dr. Hay and Belfrage's Memoirs of Dr. Waugh. He was the father of the late Dr. Coventry, Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh, and one of his daughters was the wife of the late Dr. Dick of Greyfriars' Church, Glasgow.

† Afterwards minister at St. Andrews, and then went to Nova Scotia.

	Time of Delivery.
—Joannes M'Alaw, Respondens; Gul. Knox et Georgius Coventry, Opponentes, ...	Febr. 18.
Thesis 3tia. Anima humana est immaterialis. — David Smith, Respondens; Joannes Patison et Gul. Kidston, Opponentes,	Martii 3.
Thesis 4ta. Philantia, seu Amor sui ipsius non est Principium Obedientiæ Moralis. — Respondens, Joannes Patison; Gul. Gib et David Smith, Opponentes, ...	Febr. 27.
Thesis 5ta. Nulla dantur Decreta Conditionata. — Gul. Gib, Respondens; Joannes Patison et Joannes Anderson, Opponentes, ...	Martii 6.
Thesis 6ta. Prædestinatio, a Conditione aliqua in Homine, ante Dei Decretum prævisa, est absolute independens. — Respondens, Gul. Knox; Gul. Ronaldson, Opponens, .	Martii 9.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED ANNO 1753.

John Anderson,	Lecture on Mat. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 verses,	Feby. 19.
	Exercise and addition on Rom. vi. 5, .	March 1.
William Knox,	Lecture Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3, 4, ...	Feby. 5.
	Pop. Sermon Isa. xlv. 22, ...	March 5.
William Kidston,	Lecture on Luke ii. 8—15, ...	March 12.
	Exercise and addition on Mark ix. 24,	March 1.
Robert Leny,	Exegesis. An Poenæ infernales sint eternæ?	Feby. 23.
	Exercise and addition on 1 Pet. v. 6, .	March 6.
Geo. Coventry,	Lecture on Mat. v. 7—11, ...	Jany. 25.
	Exercise and addition on 2 Pet. i. 21, .	Feby. 5.
John M'Cala,	Lecture on Psal. cx. 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .	Jan. 19.
	Exercise and addition on James i. 6, .	Feby. 23.
Wm. Ronaldson,	Exegesis. An Jesus Christus, Filius Dei appellatur, Secundum Naturam, aut Secundum Officium ejus Mediatorium?	March 9.
	Lecture on Mat. xiii. 37—43, . . .	Feby. 26.
	Exercise and addition on James iv. 8,	Jan. 25.
David Smith,	Exegesis. An Scripturæ Sacræ vere sint divinæ et divinitus inspiratæ? . .	Jan. 19.
	Homily on Mat. vi. 21, ...	Feby. 23.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1753.

Thesis 1. Scripturæ Sacræ vere sunt divinæ et divinitus inspiratæ. — Dav. Smith, Respondens; Joan. M'Cala et Rob. Leny, Opponentes, ...	Jan. 25.
Thesis 2. Poenæ Infernales sunt eternæ. — Rob. Leny, Respondens; Gul. Ronaldson, Opponens, ...	Febr. 23.
Thesis 3. Jesus Christus est Deus necessario existens et independens. — Gul. Knox, Respondens; Gul. Kidston et Joan. Patison, Opponentes, ...	Febr. 26.
Thesis 4. Jesus Christus, Filius Dei appellatur, Secundum Naturam, non Secundum Officium ejus Mediatorium. — Gul. Ronaldson, Respondens; Joan. Anderson, Opponens,	March 9.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 5. Gratia physice prædeterminans, ad veram Conversionem requiritur. — Joa. M'Ala, Respondens; Gul. Knox et Dav. Smith, Opponentes, ...	Febr. 26
Thesis 6. Justitia Christi Mediatoria est sola Fœderis Gratiæ Conditio. — Gul. Kidston, Respondens; Rob. Leny, Opponens, ...	March 8.
Thesis 7. Adamus primus, in ipsa Creatione, Justitia Originali ornatus fuit. — Rob. Leny, Respondens; Joan. M'Cala, Opponens, ...	March 9.
Thesis 8. Anima Humana non est ex Traduce. — David Smith, Respondens; Gul. Kidston, Opponens, . . .	March 5.
Thesis 9. Nulla datur Distinctio inter Episcopum et Presbyterum Sermone et Doctrina laborantem. — David Smith, Respondens; Gul. Knox, Opponens, ...	March 6.
Thesis 10. Primum Adami Peccatum, omnibus ejus Posteris, naturaliter ab ipso oriundis, justissime imputatur. — Gul. Ronaldson, Respondens; Joan. Anderson, Opponens, .	March 8.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED ANNO 1754.

John Anderson,	Pop. Sermon on John xvii. 17. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth,"	Febr. 23.
William Kidston,	Pop. Sermon on Psal. lxxii. 17, first clause, "His name shall endure for ever,"	Mar. 18.
Wm. Ronaldson,	Pop. Sermon on Psal. lxxxix. 28, last clause, "My covenant shall stand fast with him,"	Mar. 25.
Geo. Coventry,	Pop. Sermon on Rom. iv. 20. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," &c., ...	Mar. 5.
David Smith,	Exercise and add. on 1 Tim. iv. 10. "Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe,"	Mar. 11.
John Beveridge,*	Exegesis. An Mors et Satisfactio Christi, ex Dei consilio, et Christi Voluntate, omnium et singulorum Loco, facta sit: An vero Electorum tantum? . .	Febr. 23.
	Homily on 1 John v. 20. "This is the true God, and eternal life," . . .	Mar. 18.
William Arnot,†	Exegesis. An Existentia Dei sit naturaliter, et per se Nota?	Mar. 5.

* Afterwards minister at Falkirk. The father of the Rev. Henry Belfrage, D. D., who was his colleague and successor. A most judicious divine and excellent man. The name is spelled Belfrage, in a subsequent page, which was the orthography adopted by the family.

† Afterwards minister at Kennoway. Author of an elaborate volume of Sermons, entitled "The Harmony of the Law and the Gospel."

		Time of Delivery.
William Archer,	Hom. 2 Tim. iii. 16, first clause, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God,"	March 18.
	Exeg. An Revelatio necessaria sit ad Salutem?	Mar. 11.
	Exeg. An circa futura contingentia et libera, Deo competat Præscientia conjecturalis tantum?	

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1754.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 1ma. Mors et Satisfactio Christi, ex Dei Consilio et Christi Voluntate, non omnium et singulorum Loco, facta est, sed Electorum tantum.—Joan. Beveridge, Respondens; Gul. Coventry et Dav. Smith, Opponentes, ...	Feb. 23.
Thesis 2da. Existentia Dei est Naturaliter et per se Nota. — Gul. Arnot, Resp.; Joan. Beveridge, Opponens, . .	Mar. 5.
Thesis 3tia. Revelatio necessaria est ad Salutem. — Gul. Archer, Resp.; Gul. Arnot, Opponens, ...	Mar. 11.
Thesis 4ta. Quicquid factu et creditu necessarium est, perfectè, et (quantum sufficit ad Salutem) perspicuè, in Sacris Scrip. continetur.—Joan. Anderson, Resp.; Gul. Kidston, Opponens, ...	Mar. 5.
Thesis 5ta. Tres sunt in Divina Essentia Personæ, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, Proprietatibus incommunicabilibus inter se distinctæ. — Gul. Kidston, Resp.; Joan. Anderson, Opponens, ...	Mar. 15.
Thesis 6ta. Objectum Prædestinationis sunt omnes Homines, quatenus in Adamo creati et lapsi, atque sic Morte eterna digni. — Geo. Coventry, Resp.; Dav. Smith, Opponens,	Mar. 8.
Thesis 7ma. Mundus non est eternus, sed conditus fuit in Principio Mosaico.—Dav. Smith, Resp.; Geo. Coventry, Opponens, ...	Mar. 12.
Thesis 8va. Imago Dei ad quam Homo ab Initio conditus fuit, non in solo Dominio consistebat, sed justitia Originalis fuit potior et præcipua ejus Pars.—Joan. Beveridge, Resp.; Gul. Arnot, Opponens, ...	Mar. 19.
Thesis 9na. Si Adamus primus in Integritate originali permansisset, nunquam moriturus fuisset. — Gul. Kidston, Resp.; Gul. Archer, Opponens, ...	Mar. 21.
Thesis 10ma. Omne Peccatum est per se et Natura sua Mortale, nullum vero veniale. —Gul. Ronaldson, Resp.; Joan. Beveridge, Opponens, ...	Mar. 25.
Thesis 11ma. Agnoscendum est in Homine, præter Actuales Transgressiones, Peccatum quod a Theologis dicitur Originale. — Gul. Arnot, Resp.; Gul. Ronaldson, Opponens,	Mar. 22.
Thesis 12ma. Peccatum potest esse Poena Peccati.	

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED ANNO 1755.

		Time of Delivery
William Kidston,	Exeg. An Foedus Sinaïticum sit Foedus operum aut Gratiæ?	March 11.
	Pop. Serm. Hebr. xii. 29. "For our God is a consuming fire,"	March 12.
David Smith,	Lecture, Mat. xxii. 34—41.	
	Pop. Serm. Phil. iii. 12. "But I follow after, if that I may apprehend," &c.,	
John Beveridge,	Exeg. An Polygamia et Concubinatus Patriarcharum Vitio caruerit? . .	
	Exer. and add. 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be," &c.,	March 11.
William Arnot,	Exeg. An Lex Dei Naturalis, ut Decalogo exprimitur, et Scripturis exponitur, sit immutabilis et eterna?	
	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. ii. 1.	
William Archer,	Exeg. An bona opera præcedant aut sequantur justificatum?	
	Hom. Rev. i. 7.	
James Mitchel,	Exeg. An quilibet in sua Religione servari possit?	
	Hom. Rev. xxii. 14.	

DISPUTATIONES, ANNO 1755.

Præter Theses Exegeticas, superioribus Quæstionibus comprehensas, sequentes Disputationi subjiciebantur.

Thesis 1ma. Dominium temporale non fundatur in Gratia.—Gul. Kidston, Defendens; Dav. Smith, Opponens.
Thesis 2da. Omne Peccatum est sua Natura mortiferum.—Dav. Smith, Defendens; Gul. Kidston, Opponens.
Thesis 3tia. Remissa Culpa, remittitur Poena.—Joan. Beveridge, Defendens; Gul. Archer, Opponens.
Thesis 4ta. Christi Victima sola fuit expiatoria.—Gul. Archer, Defendens; Joan. Beveridge, Opponens.
Thesis 5ta. Pronitas ad Malum non fluit ex Principiis Naturæ integræ.—Gul. Arnot, Defendens; Jac. Mitchel, Opponens.
Thesis 6ta. Ignorantia non excusat Peccatum. — Jac. Mitchel, Defendens; Gul. Arnot, Opponens.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED MARCH AND APRIL, 1756.

		Time of Delivery
David Smith		
John Beveridge,	Lect. on Luke ix. 28, 29, 30, 31, . .	March 25.
	Pop. Sermon on Luke ix. 31. "Who appeared in glory, and spake," &c., .	March 30.
William Arnot,	Lect. on Luke ix. 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36,	March 24.
	Pop. Sermon on Luke ix. 35, . . .	March 29.
William Archer,*	Lect. on Psal. xxiii, ...	March 18.
	Exer. and add. on 1 Pet. iii. 18, . .	March 30.
James Mitchel,	Exer. and add. on 2 Pet. ii. 5, . . .	March 18.
	Lect. on Psal. xliii., ...	March 29.
John Bennet,	Exeg. An Deum credere unum essentia, trinum Personis, Polytheismum, vel Contradictionem implicet? . . .	April 8.
	Hom. on Rom. i. 20, ...	April 21.
Archd. Hall,†	Exeg. An Religiones Mysteria debeant exigi ad Lumen Rationis nostræ corruptæ, et ex illo suspendi? . . .	April 8.
	Hom. (Excused from it.)	
Andrew Moir,‡	Pop. Sermon on Rom. vii. 9. "I was alive without the law," &c., . . .	April 21.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1757.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 1ma. Robertus Nicol, Defendens; Alexander Shanks, Opponens.—Mundus non est vel potuit esse ab æterno,	Martii 25.
Thesis 2da. Virtutis et Vitii Discrimen non ex Sensu Morali sed ex jure naturali petendum est.—Jacobus Oliphant, Respondens; Alexr. Dick et Gul. Arnot, Opponentes, ...	Martii 28.
Thesis 3tia. Mendacium non est sub ullo Prætextu licitum. Robertus Campbel, Respondens; Jac. Mitchel et Joan. Belfrage, Opponentes, ...	Martii 28.
Thesis 4ta. Omnis Notitia ex Sensibus non hauritur.—Joan. Craig, Respondens; Jac. Bennet et Rob. Nicol, Opponentes,	April 7.

* Died May 11, 1756.

† Afterwards minister first at Torphichen, and then at Wells Street, Oxford Road, London. A man before his age, distinguished for piety, and judiciousness. He was perhaps the first among the Burghers, who apprehended distinctly the true relation of Church and State. His writings are numerous and valuable; especially his "Gospel Worship," "Church Fellowship," "Humble Attempt,"—a Defence of Presbytery, and his posthumous Treatise on Faith.

‡ Afterwards minister of Selkirk. One of the most popular preachers of his time. He published a number of sermons, all of them highly creditable to him as a scholar, a divine, and an orator. Father-in-law to Dr. Lawson, his successor.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 5ta. Mysteria Fidei ita sunt supra Rationem, ut tamen non sunt contra illam.—Robertus Harper, Respondens; Joan. Bennet et Tho. Litster, Opponentes, ...	April 21.
Thesis 6ta. Nulla absurda Moses narrat, vel indigna Fide.—Alexr. Shanks, Respondens; Joan. Johnston et Joan. Low, Opponentes, ...	April 4.
Thesis 7ma. Resurrectio Mortuorum et possibilis est, et futura. — Joan Johnston, Respondens; Arch. Hall et Robertus Harper, Opponentes, ...	April 4.
Thesis 8va. Applicatio Redemptionis adæquatur ejus Impetratione, ut nec latior sit, nec angustior.—Alexr. Dick, Respondens; Joan. Belfrage et Dav. Erskine, Opponentes,	
Thesis 9na. Animæ non transeunt de Corpore in Corpus; sed unicuique Homini sua Anima est peculiaris.—Joan. Low, Respondens; Jac. Oliphant et Rob. Campbel, Opponentes, ...	April 21
Thesis 10ma. Deum esse Spiritum incorporeum, et Scriptura et Ratio luculenter docet.—Jac. Bennet, Respondens; Joan. Craig et Tho. Litster, Opponentes, . . .	April 19.
Thesis 11ma. Dantur Tartara et Poenae infernales, in quibus impii sunt aeternùm cruciandi.—Tho. Litster, Respondens; Gul. Arnot et Joan. Bennet, Opponentes, . . .	April 19.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, ANNO 1757.

		Time of Delivery.
Alexr. Dick,*	Pop. Serm. James i. 17. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,"	April 8.
Dav. Smith,	Pop. Serm. Acts xix. 5, ...	April 22.
James Mitchel,	Pop. Serm. Rom. iii. 27. "Where is boasting then?"	March 21.
John Belfrage,	Pop. Serm. Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel,"	March 16.
William Arnot,	Pop. Serm. Luke xi. 21, 22, . . .	March 25.
John Bennet,	Exer. and add. Heb. x. 38. "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back," &c., ...	April 18.
Archd. Hall,	Hom. Psal. xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," . .	March 16.
	Exer. and add. James i. 22. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your ownselves," .	March 29.

* Afterwards minister of Aberdeen. The father of the Rev. John Dick, D.D. A man of excellent talents and primitive worth.

		Time of Delivery
James Oliphant,*	Exeg. An turpis et honesti, Virtutis et Vitii Discrimen, ex Sensu Morali, seu mero Hominum arbitrio; an vero ex Jure Naturali, omnium conscientiis insculpto, petendum sit?	March 28.
	Hom. Psal. cxlvii. 5. "Of great power,"	April 11.
Robert Campbel,†	Exeg. An Mendacium, sub ullo Prætextu, licitum sit?	March 28.
	Hom. Psal. cxlvii. 5, third clause, "His understanding is infinite," . . .	April 11.
John Craig, Irel.	Exeg. An omnis Notitia ex sensibus hauriatur?	April 7.
	Hom. Gen. ii. 7. "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground."	April 1.
Robt. Harper, Irel.	Exeg. An Mysteria Fidei, ita sint supra Rationem, ut tamen non sint contra illam?	April 21.
	Hom. Heb. xi. 6, second clause, "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is,"	April 7.
Robert Nicol,‡	Exeg. An Mundus sit, vel potuerit esse ab æterno?	March 25.
	Hom. Psal. xc. 2, ...	March 21.
Alexr. Shanks,§	Exeg. An ulla absurda Moses narret, vel indigna Fide?	April 4.
	Hom. John v. 39, first clause, "Search the scriptures,"	March 29.
John Johnstoun,‖	Exeg. An Resurrectio Mortuorum sit possibilis et futura?	April 4.
	Hom. 1 Cor. xv. 33. "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners,"	April 1.

* Afterwards minister of the Established Church, Dumbarton. Author of "Catechisms" which were considerably popular in their day. It is said Mr. Fisher gave the profits of two Action Sermons, which he published in 1755, to assist in Mr. Oliphant's education.

† Afterwards minister of Stirling. Perhaps the most accomplished orator, ever produced in the Secession. Mr. Fisher's son-in-law. Author of two excellent Sermons. A notice of him is to be found in the Memoir of his son-in-law, John Smart, D.D., his colleague and successor, by his grandson, John Smart, D.D., Leith—prefixed to a volume of posthumous Sermons.

‡ Afterwards minister of Kelso.

§ Afterwards minister of Jedburgh,—distinguished for personal piety and masculine eloquence. He published two volumes of Sermons in his lifetime, one in 12mo. and another in 8vo. He also published a number of occasional tracts. Two of them, connected with the political disturbances at the commencement of the French Revolution, awakened a good deal of interest. A posthumous volume of Sermons, with a short Memoir, was published by his amiable colleague and successor, the Rev. Peter Young. He declined a pension when offered by Government, and recommended the minister of the parish to the notice of the Crown.

‖ Afterwards minister of Ecclefechan, then called the Congregation of Annandale. A most venerable, judicious, useful minister.

		Time of Delivery.
John Low,*	Exeg. An Animæ transeant de Corpore in Corpus; an vero unicuique Homini sua Anima sit peculiaris? . . .	April 21.
	Hom. Acts xvii. 28, first clause, "For in him we live, move, and have our being,"	April 8.
James Bennet,	Exeg. An Deum esse Spiritum incorporeum, et Scriptura, et Ratio luculenter doceat?	April 19.
Thos. Litster,†	Exeg. An dentur Tartara et Poenæ infernales, in quibus impii sint æternùm cruciandi?	April 19.
Dav. Erskine,‡	Pop. Serm. Eph. v. 7. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them," .	April 18.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, ANNO 1758.

		Time of Delivery.
Arch. Hall,	Lect. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," &c., ...	Feby. 21.
	Pop. Sermon 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear," &c., . . .	Feby. 25.
James Oliphant,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 7. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept," &c., .	March 3.
Robert Campbel,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 8. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord," &c.,	March 3.
Alexr. Shanks,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," &c., ...	Feby. 21.
John Johnston,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 11. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner," &c., . . .	March 8.
Robert Nicol,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness,) but," &c., ...	March 8.

* Afterwards minister of Biggar—a popular preacher and diligent minister.

† Afterwards minister of Dundee—successor of Mr. M'Ewen. He died young. The Rev. Mr. Shirra of Kirkcaldy gives an account of his last days in his "Deathbed Dialogue."

‡ Son of Ebenezer Erskine. He was a young man of most promising abilities, and had distinguished himself at the University. But owing either to over-application to the study of abstract science, or to the agitations produced in a very sensitive mind by "the Cambuslang work," his nervous system was permanently injured, and he was obliged to abandon his design to devote himself to the ministry. He edited a posthumous volume of his father's sermons.

		Time of Delivery.
John Low,	Exer. and add. 2 Pet. iii. 12. "Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," &c., ...	March 25.
Tho. Litster,	Hom. 1 John iii. 4. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is a transgression," &c., . .	March 23.
Rich. Rammadge,	Exeg. An sola Honestas Moralis sufficiat ad Salutem?	March 18.
	Hom. 1 John iii. 5. "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him," &c., ...	Feby. 25.
James Fletcher,*	Exeg. An Summum Bonum in Animi Dotibus, Mundanis Deliciis, an vero aliunde quærendum sit?	March 18.
	Hom. 1 John iii. 8. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested," &c.,	March 25.
Peter Watson,	Exeg. An Voluntas Dei sit prima Justitiæ Regula? (Did not deliver it.)	
	Hom. 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son," &c., . .	April 8.
John Chalmers,	Exeg. An Jesus Nazarenus, quem Judæi per Pilatum crucifixerunt, sit verus ille Messias?	March 25.
	Hom. 1 John iii. 8, first clause, "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." (Did not deliver it.)	
John Bety,	Exeg. An Miracula quæ patravit Moses, non magica, sed vere divina fuerint? (Did not deliver it.)	
	Hom. 1 John iii. 8, second clause, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy," &c.,	March 31.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1758.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 1ma. Ad Thesin, Richardi Rammadge; Joan. Chalmers, Opponens, ...	Mar. 18.
Thesis 2da. Ad Thesin, Joannis Chalmers; Rich. Rammadge, Opponens, ...	Mar. 25.
Thesis 3tia. Ad Thesin, Jacobi Fletcher; Petrus Watson, Opponens, ...	Mar. 18.
Thesis 4ta. Ad Thesin, Petri Watson; Jac. Fletcher, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	

* Afterwards minister at Copshawholm, Liddesdale, Roxburghshire;—a man of singularly primitive manners. He imbibed Dr. Ridgley's views respecting the Sonship of Christ, and spent the evening of his days in private life.

	Time of Delivery.
Thesis 5ta. Prædestinatio est absoluta, vel plane independens a Conditione aliqua, ante Dei Decretum prævisa.—Arch. Hall, Respondens; Jac. Oliphant, Opponens, .	Mar. 22.
Thesis 6ta. Prædestinatio est immutabilis, ita ut Electi nulli deficere, nec Reprobi ulli servari queant.—Jacobus Oliphant, Respondens; Arch. Hall, Opponens, . . .	Mar. 22.
Thesis 7ma. Singuli Homines ad suum Finem particulariter prædestinantur.—Rob. Campbel, Resp.; Alexr. Shanks, Opponens, ...	Mar. 24.
Thesis 8va. Aliqui tantum, non omnes sunt electi.—Alexr. Shanks, Resp.; Rob. Campbel, Opponens, . .	Mar. 24.
Thesis 9na. Fideles, de sua Electione ad Gloriam, infallibiliter in hac Vita certiorari possunt.—Joan. Johnston, Respondens; Rob. Nicol, Opponens, ...	Mar. 24.
Thesis 10ma. Ethnici, Divina Revelatione destituti, Salvari nequeunt.—Rob. Nicol, Resp.; Joan. Johnston, Opponens,	Mar. 24.
Thesis 11ma. Potentia creandi nulli Creaturæ communicabilis est.—Joan. Low, Respondens; Tho. Litster, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	
Thesis 12ma. Mundus in Principio Mosaico creatus fuit.—Tho. Litster, Respondens; Joan. Low, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	
Thesis 13tia. Astrologia judiciaria, ex Usu Luminarium, extrui nequit.—Joan. Bety, Respondens; Joan. Carlisle, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	
Thesis 14ta. Omnia, sine ulla Exceptione, Divinæ Providentiæ subsunt.—Joan. Carlisle, Respondens; Joan. Bety, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED ANNO 1759.

		Time of Delivery.
James Oliphant,	In a family at Campbeltoun this year.	
Robert Campbel,	Lecture on John i. 29—34, ...	March 16.
	Pop. Sermon on John i. 34. "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." (Did not deliver it.)	
John Johnston,	Lecture on Heb. xi. 7. to 10, . . .	March 17.
	Pop. Serm. Heb. xi. 10. "He looked for a city that hath foundations," &c.,	
John Low,	Lecture on Heb. xi. 1—6, ...	March 16.
	Pop. Serm. on Heb. xi., first clause of ver. 6. "But without faith it is impossible to please God,"	March 31.
Tho. Litster,	Exer. and addition on 2 Pet. iii. 14. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things," &c., ...	April 3.
Alexr. Shanks,	Lecture on Philem. 1—22, ...	March 8.
	Pop. Serm. Rom. i. 17, ...	March 12.

		Time of Delivery.
Robert Nicol,	Lecture on Prov. viii. 13—19, . . .	March 8.
	Pop. Serm. 1 Pet. ii. 24, ...	March 12.
Peter Watson,	Exer. and addition on 2 Pet. iii. 17, .	April 3.
	Last year's Exegesis. An Voluntas Dei sit prima Justitiæ Regula? . . .	March 21.
James Fletcher,	Exer. and addition on 2 Pet. iii. 18, .	March 21.
Thos. Edmund,	Exeg. An Moralitas Actionum fundetur in Sympathia, aut in Benevolentia Universali?	March 19.
	Hom. on Rom. ii. 14, ...	March 17.
Sam. Kinloch,*	Exeg. An Ethnici, Divina Revelatione destituti, Salvari queant?	
	Pop. Serm. Rom. viii. 4, ...	March 31.
John Craig, Irel.	Exer. and addition on 2 Pet. iii. 13, .	March 19.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1759.

	Time of Delivery.
Ad Thesin, Thomæ Edmund; Sam. Kinloch et Petrus Watson, Opponentes, ...	March 19.
Ad Thesin, Petri Watson; Jacobus Fletcher, Opponens, .	March 22.
Ad Thesin, Samuelis Kinloch; Alexr. Shanks, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND DELIVERED ANNO 1760.

		Time of Delivery.
James Oliphant,	Lecture on Mat. xxv. 1—6, . . .	March 10.
	Pop. Serm. on Mat. xxv. 6. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom," &c., . . .	March 12.
Robert Campbel,	Last year, Pop. Serm. on John i. 34.	
John Low,	Lecture on Isa. 12th chap., ...	March 11.
	Pop. Serm. on Isa. xii. 3. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water," &c.,	March 20.
Thos. Litster,	Lecture on Mat. xxv. 7, 8, 9, 10, . .	March 27.
	Pop. Serm. on Matt. xxv. 10, last clause,	April 3.
James Fletcher,	Lecture on Mat. xxv. 31, 32, 33, 34, .	April 26.
	Pop. Serm. on Mat. xxv. 34, . . .	April 1.

* Afterwards went to America;—returned to this country, and was long minister of Paisley. His portly form and fondness for systematic divinity obtained for him among his associates the appellation Doctor. On its being asked at an acquaintance how he had got his title, it was replied, "By universal consent—which is as good as the consent of a university."

		Time of Delivery.
Tho. Edmund,	Exer. and addition on 2 Pet. iii. 14, .	March 11.
John Beaty, Irel.	Exeg. An Miracula quæ patravit Moses, non magica, sed vere divina fuerint?	March 10.
	Exer. and addition on Rev. i. 18. "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive," &c., ...	March 26.
Joseph Ker, Irel.	Exeg. An Theologia Naturalis sufficiens sit ad Salutem?	March 19.
	Hom. on John iv. 24. "God is a Spirit,"	April 4.
Jas. M'Alaw, Irel.	Exeg. An Ratio Humana sit principium et fundamentum Theologiæ? . .	March 19.
	Hom. on John iv. 24, second clause, "And they that worship," &c., . .	April 2.
John Bennet,	Lecture on Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, 25, 26,	
	Pop. Serm. on 1 John iii. 1, . . .	April 7.

DISPUTATIONES.

	Time of Delivery.
Ad Thesin, Joannis Beaty; Thos. Edmund, Opponens, .	March 20.
Ad Thesin, Josephi Ker; Jacobus M'Alaw, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.	
Ad Thesin, Jacobi M'Alaw; Joannes Beaty, Opponens. (Non disputarunt.)	

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED AND DELIVERED, ANNO 1761.

		Time of Delivery.
Robert Campbel,	Pop. Serm. on John i. 29. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away," &c.	April 3.
Thos. Edmund,	Lecture on Dan. ix. 20—25, . . .	March 23.
	Pop. Serm. on Dan. ix. 24. "And bring in everlasting righteousness," . .	March 23.
James Fletcher,	Pop. Serm. on Heb. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author," &c., ...	March 27.
Joseph Ker,	Lecture on Psal. xxiii., ...	March 27.
	Pop. Serm. on Psal. xxiii. 5, first clause, "Thou preparest a table for me," &c.,	March 23.
James Moir,*	Exeg. An Ethnici, Divina Revelatione destituti, Salvari queant? . . .	March 6.
	Hom. Gen. i. 1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"	April 3.

* Afterwards minister, first at Cumbernauld and then at Tarbolton. Author of a number of publications on the controversy excited by Dr. M'Gill's Practical Essay on the Death of Christ, distinguished for their ability.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED IN FEBRUARY, 1762.

		Time of Delivery.
Thos. Edmund,	At Monyqueel in Arran. Did not come up this year, because his time with the family ends with May; and if he came over in the months of February, March, and April, he would have that time to make up in Summer.	
Jas. M'Alaw, Irel.	Exercise and addition on Jude ver. 21. "Keep yourselves in the love of God,"	March 10.
	Lecture on John iii. 16, 17. "God so loved the world," &c., ...	March 31.
James Moir,	Exer. and addition on Jude ver. 24, 25. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling," &c., ...	Feby. 24.
John Marshal, *	Exeg. An detur Theologia Naturalis?	March 9.
	Hom. John iii. 3. "Jesus answered and said, Except a man be born again," &c., ...	March 25.
Sam. Kennedy, Ireland,	Exegesis. An Dei Existentia sit Naturaliter et per se Nota?	Feby. 24.
	Hom. John i. 1, last clause, "And the Word was God."	March 10.
Jas. Waugh, from Jedburgh, †	Exegesis. An Ethnici, Divina Revelatione destituti, Salvari queant? . .	March 9.
	Hom. Acts viii. 37, last clause, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,"	March 25.
Geo. Wilson,	Exegesis. An quilibet in sua Religione Servari possit?	March 15.
	Hom. Luke xix. 13. "Occupy till I come,"	April 2.
William Hall, ‡	Exegesis. An Scripturæ Sacræ verè sint Divinæ, et Divinitus inspiratæ? .	March 15.
	Hom. John vi. 48. "I am the bread of life,"	April 5.

DISPUTATIONES ANNO 1762.

	Time of Delivery.
Ad Thesin, Joannis Marshal; Jacobus Moir, Opponens, .	March 9.
Ad Thesin, Samuelis Kennedy; Joannes Marshal, Opponens,	March 9.
Ad Thesin, Jacobi Waugh; Samuel Kennedy, Opponens, .	Eod. Die.
Ad Thesin, Georgii Wilson; Jacobus Waugh, Opponens, .	Martii 13.

* Afterwards minister of Alnwick—a most saintly man.
† Afterwards minister of Sunderland, Durham.
‡ Afterwards minister of Bathgate. He died young.

	Time of Delivery.
Ad Thesin, Gulielmi Hall; Georgius Wilson, Opponens, .	Martii 13.
Poenæ infernales sunt æternæ.—Jacobus Moir, Defendens; Jacobus M'Alaw, Opponens, ...	Eod. Die.
Mundus non est eternus, sed in principio Mosaico conditus fuit. — Jacobus M'Alaw, Defendens; Gulielmus Hall, Opponens, ...	Eod. Die.

March 22*d*, 1762.—Five weeks after I was begun to teach came up Mr. John Bennet, detained (as he said) by his aunt's indisposition from coming up sooner. And Mr. George Thomson, Precentor to Mr. Thomas Mair, who had been three years attending Mr. Alexander Moncrief as one of his Students, before the Antiburgher party proceeded against Mr. Thomas Mair; but ever since their sentence of deposition against Mr. Mair, the said Mr. Thomson had left them and cleaved to Mr. Thomas Mair's ministry, and teaches a school at Milnathort. This Mr. Thomson was recommended to me by Mr. Swanston. I prescribed to them the following Discourses:—

		Time of Delivery.
John Bennet,	His Lecture on Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, 25, 26, prescribed in the year 1758, and not yet delivered. He delivered it this year, ...	April 5.
George Thomson,*	Pop. Sermon on Ezek. xxxvi. 27, first clause, "I will put my Spirit within you,"	April 2.

DISCOURSES PRESCRIBED TO THE STUDENTS, AND TO BE DELIVERED ANNO 1763.

		Time of Delivery.
James Moir,	Lecture on Psal. cx.	
	Pop. Serm. on Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou," &c.	
James Waugh,	Exer. and addition on Jude ver. 1. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James," &c.	
John Marshal,	Exer. and addition on Jude ver. 3. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you," &c.	
Geo. Wilson,	Exer. and addition on Jude ver. 4. "For there are certain men crept in unawares," &c.	

* Afterwards minister of Kilmany or Rathillet. He embraced Mr. Thomas Mair's views as to the atonement, left the denomination, joined the Old Light, and published some Sermons and Tracts on prophetical and other topics.

		Time of Delivery.
William Hall,	Exer. and addition on Jude ver. 5. "I will therefore put you in remembrance though you once," &c.	
John Riddoch, *	Exegesis. An Dei Existentia ex Solo Lumine Naturali cognosci possit?	
	Hom. Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever."	
Thomas Dickson, Ireland,	Exegesis. An Ratio Hominis Controversiarum judex sit?	
	Hom. John i. 1, last clause, "And the Word was God."	
John Rogers, Irel.†	Exegesis. An Revelatio necessaria sit ad Salutem?	
	Hom. Heb. xi. 6. "But without faith it is impossible to please him."	
Jos. Little, Irel.	Exegesis. An Anima Humana sit immaterialis?	March 2.
John Henderson, ‡	Exegisis. An Mysteria Fidei, ita sint supra Rationem, ut tamen non sint contra illam?	
	Hom. 1 Tim. iii. 16, second clause, "God was manifest in flesh."	
Thomas Watters, §	Exegesis. An Jesus Nazarenus, quem Judæi, per Pilatum crucifixerunt, sit verus ille et promissus Messias?	
	Hom. on John iii. 27. "Jesus answered and said, a man can receive nothing," &c.	
Geo. Thomson,	Lecture on Heb. x. 19—23. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest," &c.	

DISPUTATIONES.

Ad Thesin, Joannis Riddoch; Thomas Dickson, Opponens.
Ad Thesin, Thomæ Dickson; Joannes Riddoch, Opponens.
Ad Thesin, Joannis Rogers; Josephus Little, Opponens.
Ad Thesin, Josephi Little; Joannes Rogers, Opponens.
Ad Thesin, Joannis Henderson; Thomas Watters, Opponens.
Ad Thesin, Thomæ Watters; Joannes Henderson, Opponens.

* Afterwards minister at Coldstream.

† Afterwards Professor of Divinity to the Associate Burgher Synod of Ireland.

‡ Afterwards minister at Dunbar. A most venerable and amiable man. Author of three excellent Discourses "on the Legal Temper."

§ Afterwards minister of Alloa.

☞ The most of the names to which no note is appended are those of Irish students, who returned and settled in their native country.

January 11*th*, 1764.—As the Irish Students, who came over here, had not access to attend their own Presbytery in Ireland; according to recommendation of last Synod, in case I was not to teach, as I am not resolved to do this year, I prescribed to them the following Discourses. To—

Samuel Kennedy,	Exercise and addition on Jude ver. 20.
	Lecture on Rev. i. verses 4, 5, and 6.
John Rogers,	Exercise and addition on Jude ver. 21.
Joseph Little,	Exercise and addition on Jude ver. 17.

No. IV.

LETTERS OF MR. FISHER, CHIEFLY TO RELATIVES.

The following letters, written at intervals during the space of nearly half-a-century, with one exception relate entirely to domestic events, and some of them singly may be thought but of trivial importance and little interest. They have been inserted as affording the most authentic and effectual means of delineating some of the most characteristic and pleasing features of the distinguished subject of the preceding narrative; and as fitted not merely to remove somewhat extensively prevalent mistakes as to the sourly ascetic character of the first Seceders, but to correct the wider and more important error, that that zeal for religious truth, and strictness in religious duty by which they were characterized, are seldom connected with the gentler charities of nature, or do not well comport with the courtesies of polished society.

No. 1. TO MISTRESS JEAN ERSKINE* (*Afterwards Mrs. Fisher*).

"My Dearest,

"I have made you so many and so ingenuous assurances of my most sincere affection and love to you, that it is almost impossible for me to do it now in stronger terms, especially when I have not the least suspicion that you think me a dissembler in this matter. The flattering and deceiving part of mankind delight in flourishing speeches, embellished with all the art of rhetoric; but where love is sincere, it is not words that are so much to be noticed as the way and manner of expressing the

* Unmarried ladies in Scotland seem at this time to have been uniformly addressed Mistress. In England Miss was coming into use.

affection; and it is always observable, that where love is strongest, there is the greatest difficulty of expressing it in words, because in that case it is almost impossible to find language to express the inward fondness of the mind. Thus I am sure it is with myself. I am conscious that my love to you is most sincere, and disinterested. I am conscious likewise that it is as great as one creature can have to another, and yet I still find it upon the increasing hand, and I cannot find words to express to you the strength of my affection. And were I sure that I possess the same room in your affections that you do in mine, I would think myself among the happiest men in the world as to earthly comfort. But what encourages me in the meantime is, that I would fain flatter myself with the thought that you have no aversion to me, and that by this time you esteem me at least above other men. But, my dearest, although I dare not venture to say further, yet this is not all that I would have even in the meantime; for whether I shall have the satisfaction to know it beforehand or not, yet it would be no doubt my desire above all earthly things that your affection to me were as great as mine is to you. I had certainly satisfied my fondness in seeing you at Dunfermline had not your peremptory, and I had almost said cruel, command discharged me from doing so. Had I thought that it was only from a principle of modesty that you laid me under this restraint, I had ventured upon disobedience; but I took you to be so peremptory, that rather than disoblige you I must deny myself the satisfaction of seeing you till you come to Portmoak, where I hope you will allow me an agreeable interview. I need not, my dearest, tell you what I am sure you doubt not, that when I wish spiritual and temporal happiness to myself, I wish it to you, and that all purchased blessings may be conferred upon you in the same degree as I would desire for myself.

Yours in the strictest bonds of affection and love while

JAMES FISHER.

"*Aug.* 25, 1726."

No. 2. TO THE REV. RALPH ERSKINE, DUNFERMLINE

"*Glasgow*, 24*th March*, 1743.

"REV. AND VERY DEAR UNCLE,

"It pleased the Lord that my wife was safely delivered of a son upon the 12th inst. So soon as he was born I named him Ralph, and intimated that name when I presented him for baptism. My wife is now tolerably well recovered, which is matter of thankfulness to the Lord, and the child is very well,

at the nursing about half-a-mile from the town. Your brother came here on Tuesday the 15th, preached and baptized the child on the Thursday thereafter, which is our ordinary week-day sermon. He preached likewise on the Sabbath after, and is to preach this day and Sabbath next, if the Lord will. . . . My child that came lately to the world, though outwardly beautiful and healthy, yet bears the image of the first Adam; but the same grace that has defaced that image in the name-father is sufficient for the name-son; there is still so much to the fore, nothing yet diminished."

No. 3. EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO THE REV. MR. KING, DROMORE, DATED GLASGOW, 18TH JAN., 1748.

"MR. A—— and you made me believe that you were to lay a representation of grievances before the General Synod, and among other things it was to be craved that a warning should be emitted against Mr. Taylor's book," [Dr. John Taylor of Norwich on Original Sin,] "and that notice should be taken of those ministers who subscribed for the same, or at least of those who cannot but be reputed to have propagated such an erroneous book as Mr. H—— J——, who subscribed for 32 copies. If redress in these matters were refused, you were to make a stand for truth. I wrote a long letter to Mr. A—— to be communicated to you, wherein I moved that you might draw up a faithful representation of grievances,—such as that several sitting members of Synod have not subscribed the Confession of Faith, —that there are many gross errors presently abounding, such as the denying the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, the original corruption and depravation of our nature, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, &c., — that Taylor's book against original sin, sapping the foundation of the whole doctrine of Christianity, is propagated in this kingdom, and that some members of Synod have encouraged the reprinting and propagating of the same; and craving that the Synod would condemn the above errors, and assert the opposite truths, and emit a warning against Taylor's book, and censure such as have propagated the same: and likewise craving, that, in order to the preservation of the purity of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the formula of subscribing the same be amended, and that therein it be expressly declared that I do not subscribe the said Confession merely as a bond of peace, but as the confession of my faith — or any other words to the above purpose answering the end of preventing a mock subscription of the Confession: and if this

representation and petition was either refused or delayed, I advised that you should have a protestation in readiness, wherein, after an adherence to the above representation, you should declare your secession from the said General Synod as no lawful or rightly constituted court of Christ, in regard that they refuse to assert the truths of Christ, and preserve and maintain the purity of doctrine in opposition to the errors raging at this day; and that it shall be lawful and warrantable for you to constitute yourselves into a Presbytery, without any subordination to the same Synod, in order to prosecute the ends of testimony for the purity of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government maintained in the Church of Scotland, and solemnly engaged to by the three kingdoms. . . . Instead, however, of falling in with what I advised, which at that time I hoped you would have done, you have huddled all up in what you call 'A Serious Warning from the General Synod of Ulster,' which is indeed a strange piece, and deserves to be exposed as a grave-stone upon truth. It is not so much as supposed [in it] that there is an erroneous member in your whole Synod. The painful task of libelling is put upon the people, although you cannot but know how that will issue. The keenest edge of your warning is against the Seceders, at whom you seem to be more offended by far than with those of the New Light way; with whom you seem plainly to have put it up by adopting the principle, 'That our sincere obedience to the moral law qualifies us for communion with God here, and eternal life hereafter.' I appeal to yourself if this is not the same upon the matter with what Mr. Colville asserts in that *scandalous sermon*—I can call it no better—which he preached on occasion of the death of Mr. Niven, p. 21. The above assertion overturns the doctrine of original sin, the satisfaction of Christ and his imputed righteousness, which you mention in your Warning. In my view, nothing can qualify for communion with God here and eternal life hereafter but vital union with the Lord Jesus by faith; and it is plain from Scripture, and from our Confession, that that obedience which is not of faith can never be acceptable to God, and consequently can never qualify for communion with him here nor eternal life hereafter, Heb. xi. 6; Conf. vi. 2, 3, 7. Though I had not, therefore, freedom when I was in Ireland to preach in your congregation, nor in Mr. H——'s, because I then thought ingenuously that you were coming forward to give a testimony for truth at the ensuing Synod, yet now that I see that you have upon the matter consented that all testimony for the truth be buried, and that you are most keenly enraged against those who desire to display a banner for the truth, were I in Ireland again I would have all freedom to preach in your congregations, if the people invited me. I am sorry that I have this to say,

that those whom I looked upon to be the defenders of truth have been the betrayers of it. Dear Sir, your Serious Warning is but a mere sham and blind, and, I believe, will impose on but few of the intelligent. I could earnestly wish that you and Mr. A—— would yet bethink yourselves, and heartily espouse the Lord's cause, for the vindication and defence of buried truth, which I am sure you can never do in conjunction with the General Synod, as matters are presently constituted. I offer my kind service to Mr. A—— and his family, where I was so kindly entertained.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

James Fisher."

No. 4. TO MRS ALISON SCOTT AT GATESHALL.

"*Glasgow*, 21*st Sept.*, 1756.

"Dear Sister,

"About two or three weeks ago, a letter came to hand from Mr. Smith of Jedburgh, with the melancholy news of your son Eben's death. I missed the opportunity of the carriers once and again, by being out of town, which is the reason of not writing you sooner. Your sister and I were very sensibly affected with this sharp and afflicting dispensation of adorable Providence towards you, which tended to revive in our memories trials of the like nature we have often met with, particularly Jessy's death, who was come a considerable length, as your dear child also was. And thus we endeavoured to place ourselves in your circumstances, and to sympathize with you, as we could, as having had frequent experience of the loss of such engaging and endearing comforts. It gives me great pleasure to find by Mr. Smith's line, that the Lord has been pleased remarkably to support you under such a trying dispensation, and that divine cordials have not been quite withheld. You know very well that he gives infinitely more than he takes away from us. "I will be thy God" is infinitely more than all created comforts in one. While himself is to the fore, we cannot be said to be destitute or stript of our *all*. If you are helped to a kindly submission to God's will of Providence in this matter, and to justify him therein, as having a sovereign and absolute disposure of you and yours, it may be a token for good that the Lord will preserve your only surviving child unto you, and likewise give you the comfort of both in one. Although your trial be smart, it might still be smarter. There is mercy mixed with the rod that you have some earthly comforts still behind, and his mercies ought to be noted as well as his judgments. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these

things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." I earnestly wish the Lord may comfort you against grief on every side. The more you think upon the great and precious promises, and what is contained in them, and the less you pore and reflect upon your departed child, the more will be your inward peace and composure.

"My wife and I and daughters here have our kind respects to you and Mr. Scott. . . Let us hear from you with the carriers from Jedburgh, and you shall not be long in getting a return. I am,

Dear Sister,

Your very affectionate and sympathizing Brother and Servant,

JAS. FISHER."

No. 5. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, April* 14, 1758.

"DEAR SISTER,

"It is so long since I heard from you that I am persuaded I wrote you last, and though at present I think so, yet I have not scrupled to write you again. Your sister and I long much to hear of your and your family's welfare. I was much indisposed this last season with a swimming in my head; but the Lord was pleased to order it in his adorable providence, that though the trouble seized so violently on most of the week-days that I was obliged to go to bed, yet I was never laid aside from preaching by it on the Sabbaths save one afternoon. And now the Lord has been pleased to remove it quite from me for a month bygone, which hath not been the case near these two years past. I desire to bless the Lord that I have never felt any bad effect of the sentences passed by our brethren upon us: and I have often heard our dear friends your father, uncle, and cousin Henry Erskine, who I hope are now in glory, say the same.

"My wife and I and our daughters all of us join in our kindly respects to Mr. Scott, to you, to William, and our sister Mary Erskine, who we hear is with you. I am,

My dear Sister,

Your very affectionate Brother and Servant,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 6. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Sept.* 22, 1762.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"Yours of the 21st of the last to my wife was very acceptable. She wrote you by the carrier immediately

after the death of our dear daughter Mrs. Erskine, and we were sorry afterwards to find that the letter miscarried, and never came to your hand. There is no sympathy like that which flows from experience. You now know the heart of a parent in the loss of one hopeful child—we of several; and therefore ought the more readily to bear one another's burdens. But not only our children, but other valuable and useful friends are now removed from us. Your father, your uncle, and his three sons, all ministers, are gone off the stage of time never to appear on it any more, and I will not readily be long behind them; for though I be in tolerable health just now, yet by the course of nature I cannot be far from my latter end, being entered on the sixty-fifth year of my age since February last.

"Your niece, Alie, whom we thought once in a bad way, is now quite recovered. She was much the better of being some time with Mrs. Henderson at Airthry.*

"All this family have their endeared love to you, and to Mr. Scott. I am glad to hear that your son William at Dalkeith is well spoke of by every body, and that Eben is a thriving child. I hope the Lord will add to their numbers.

Dear Sister,

Your very affectionate Brother,

James Fisher."

No. 7. TO MISS MARY ERSKINE.

"*Glasgow, Nov.* 10, 1762.

"Dear Mally,

"Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Shirra, with the enclosed to you, which is sent you unopened; none here would be so ungenerous as to open a letter of that kind: however he acquaints your mamma and me, that therein he makes a proposal of marriage unto you, and earnestly wants our concurrence. Both of us are well pleased with the proposal, if it is agreeable to your mind, and think it every way more feasible than the last motion that was lately made and rejected; so that you have the concurrence of your parents in giving a modest reception to this proposal, in case you see him before we see you. Meanwhile we will lay no constraint upon you to do any thing in the momentous step of marriage. All your sisters, and your brothers likewise, concur in the motion. You may communicate this to your aunt, and see what she thinks of it. She will readily write us her mind; but it needs not be talked of to

* The salubrious nature of the springs there seems to have been known so early as 1762.

any but amongst ourselves. All of us here have our kind respects to your aunt and our love to you. I am,

My dear Mally,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 8. TO MISS ALISON FISHER AND TO MRS. GRAY.*

"*Glasgow, Aug. 15th*, 1763.

"MY DEAR ALIE,

"Your mamma and I have been pretty lonelisome this summer,—none of our daughters with us but Peggie.—If you incline to stay two or three weeks longer, and to return by Stirling, your mamma and I will not be against anything that will tend to recreate you and confirm your health; though we are longing to see you. With our endeared love to you all three, I am,

Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

TO MRS. GRAY.

"MY DEAR MALLY,

"Both your parents wish you and your husband all the comfort and happiness of a married lot. We hope you are married in the Lord, and in that case "A little that a righteous man," or woman, "hath is better than the riches of many wicked." It is the blessing of the Lord only that maketh rich.—Study to be obliging to your husband, as I am persuaded he is to you. You are married for life, and the more constant and equal your mutual love and affection to each other is, the more happy will you be in one another's society. Your mamma and I have our kindest love to Mr. Gray and you. I am,

Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

TO BOTH MY DAUGHTERS.

I TRUST you do not neglect to fear the Lord, by praying to him in secret *at least* morning and evening every day. I have endeavoured to devote you to the Lord, and yourselves have

* Mary Fisher had been lately married to Mr. John Gray, Printer, Edinburgh; and her sister, Alison, was on a visit to her.

engaged once and again to be his at his table. Study, therefore, to have a conversation becoming the gospel in all wisdom and prudence:—and the God of all grace be with you both."

No. 9. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow*, *Dec.* 26, 1764.

"Very dear Son,

"It gave us all here very great concern when we heard by yours of Mary's illness.—I hope the Lord will give his blessing to the means using for her recovery. Tell Peggie that I did not at all take ill what she wrote. Her mamma and I were much diverted with the smartness of her reflections, only we think that the proposal from such a deserving young man might at least require some consideration.—I am very glad you are throng in business, and that Mr. Brown's small Catechism sells well. None of them are yet come to this place, though very much wanted. The swelling of my feet is abating, and I hope to be quite well in a few days. I preached the half of the day last Sabbath, and hope to preach the whole Sabbath next. By my confinement to the house for two weeks past, I have come better speed on the Catechism. I am just now on the question "What is effectual calling?" I am,

Your affectionate Father,

James Fisher."

No. 10. TO MRS. GRAY.

"*Glasgow*, *Jan.* 10, 1766.

"My very dear Mally,

"Your mamma would gladly come to see you, but she was so sick in the chaise the last time she came from Stirling that she says that she doubts if ever she will venture abroad again. She tells me she wrote you about taking care of yourself;—an advice which I second and back with all the warmth and earnestness that can warm the heart of a parent. Do not give entertainment to slavish fears. I trust that the same divine hand that has carried multitudes through will preserve you also, and compass you about with songs of deliverance. I shall desire not to forget you in secret. What our Lord said to Jairus I say to you, "Be not afraid, only believe." Entrust yourself into his kindly hand, and there will be no fear of you. Your mamma

and sisters join me in our endeared love to Mr. Gray and you. I am,

My dear Child,
Your most affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"P.S.—Tell my dear Son, Mr. Gray, that I have sent the two manuscripts of Mr. Brown's with Mr. Mowbray, according to his desire."

No. 11. TO MR JOHN GRAY, PRINTER, IN JACKSON'S CLOSE, EDINBURGH.

(*Without date, but must have been towards the end of May* 1766.)

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"It was very comfortable news to us all, and what we much longed to hear by yours of the 26th, that Mary was safely delivered of a daughter, and that she was in a hopeful way, having got good rest, and being refreshed therewith. My wife and I desire to join you in thankfulness to the Lord, for his sparing and recovering mercy on this occasion. We ought not to forget his benefits; and, whoever is so wise as to observe the conduct of his Providence, especially as it is subservient to the promise, even they shall see the love and kindness of the Lord.

"I see by yours that the child's name is Erskine, which is no doubt agreeable to us here who are the grand-parents. We were somewhat diverted with your description of the child;—that she is a fine lively child, of such growth that the midwife said she might have made her appearance a month sooner, and that she is very engaging. By ourselves, we easily saw how much she had already attracted your affections. But we should always remember that these (like all other time's-things) are very uncertain pleasures. We have our endeared love to one and all of you, and Mr. Campbell. Tell him that I expect from him a particular account how you all are, and how Mary continues to recover; if there is no remnant of trouble hanging about Alie, and likewise concerning the affairs of the Assembly, of which I have as yet got no distinct account. I am,

Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 12. TO MRS. GRAY.

"*Glasgow, June* 17, 1766.

"My dear Mally,

"As your mamma and I had you much on our minds before your delivery, (and I hope at a throne of grace,) so we have essayed to be thankful to God since your delivery, that your recovery has been so comfortable and without any backsetts that we heard of, and that our dear young grandchild Erskina is in such a thriving way. These mercies are matters of much thankfulness to the Lord. And the more thankful we are, the more humble we will be, considering that we are less than the least of his favours.—We hear you have the nurse in the house, which, though it may perhaps be somewhat more expensive, yet it will be by far a greater pleasure to have the dear child continually under your own eye. I have written to Alie about her coming home. Your mother and I join in our endeared love to you and Mr. Gray, whom we expect to see next week. I am,

Your very affectionate Father,

James Fisher."

No. 13. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow, July* 28, 1766.

"My very dear Son,

"Nothing could give greater pleasure to my wife, two daughters, and me, than the agreeable accounts by yours of Thursday evening last of our dear Mary's being considerably better. We are glad that little dear Erskine is so happily provided.—I hope you and we will concur in ascribing the glory of your spouse's begun recovery to the Lord, and wait on him for the perfecting of it. Let us hear by to-morrow's evening post how matters continue with her. The post hour is now come.

Your very affectionate Father,

James Fisher."

No. 14. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, July* 31, 1766.

"My very dear Son,

"In consistency with a desire at submission to adorable Providence so far as we can attain it, we cannot help being concerned and uneasy about the long continuance of dear Mary's

feverish ailment. What gives us encouragement is the favourable opinion of her physicians, (if it be candid,) and the good hopes you entertain of her recovery. It gives us great pleasure to hear that Miss Babby Beugo waits on our daughter, she being such a sagacious girl. When Mary is somewhat better I will write her. Our endeared love to you all. I am,

Your very affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 15. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, August* 6, 1766.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I desire to join with you in blessing the Lord for the favourable turn he has mercifully pleased to give unto dear Mary's ailment;—that the fever is mostly gone, and that she had some better rest on the night of Monday last than she has had since the trouble seized her. And our getting no letters this day I take as a token for good that her recovery is continuing. I hope we shall all of us be enabled to ascribe the glory of this and all our other mercies to the glorious Author of them. —Although we flatter ourselves in the meantime about Mary's recovery, we will be glad to be confirmed in a particular account of it by course of post. Our endeared love to you both. I am,

Your very affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 16. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Sept.* 3, 1766.

"VERY DEAR SON,

"Acquaint my wife that, by the mercy of God, all of us here are in good health, and are glad to hear by yours yesterday that she is so likewise, which tended to compose my mind, which was formerly doubtful about that material circumstance.

"Our receiving no accounts by this day's post was interpreted by all that knew it, that dear Mary was rather in a more favourable way than on Monday evening. I doubt not that her physicians do all in their power for her relief; but, in the use of lawful means, there must be a looking above them to the great and sovereign Physician, who has the power of life and death in his hand. She is in the Lord's hand, and none knows but he may yet bring her back from the gates of death, and spare

her for a comfort to us all. It gives me great pleasure to find her so agreeably exercised about her soul's state; and yet even that makes me more averse to quit grips.

"You may be sure I would strongly incline to see her, but it is not possible for me to come and return in three or four days, as I behoved to do, or let my people be vacant on a Sabbath, which would not be for edification, as they have been in that situation once and again this season already. It gives me much satisfaction that my dear wife is with her, who can be of more use to her every way than ten of me could be. Sure I am that my sympathy at the throne of grace, such as it is, is not awanting.

"I conclude with my endeared love to you all. I am anxious lest my dear wife, out of love to our daughter, put herself to too much fatigue. I am,

Very dear and afflicted Son,
Your very much affected and sympathizing Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 17. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow*, 20*th Sept.*, 1766.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"To my great surprise my wife arrived here this evening, betwixt 7 and 8, in good health, but much fatigued. I am glad of the accounts she gives of dear Mary, that, though she be still in great distress, there is, at least, a probability of her recovery, that she has some appetite, and her pulse regular, though quick. She is in the Lord's hands. I trust her soul is bound up in the bundle of life with the living Head, and that he will spare her to glorify him a while yet upon earth.

"It being Saturday night, and my studies on hand, I have not time to insist. Only, by the first return of post, send us word how our dear daughter is. She is much upon our heart. Our endeared love to you and her, and Miss Babby Beugo, who takes such a tender care of her. I am,

My dear Son,
Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"P. S.—I was so confused with one thing or other when writing the above, that I forgot to mention my dear Annie; but she is seldom out of mind for all that. All of us here are in health. We are all of us anxious to know if any favourable symptom continue, and how far Mary's pulse is below 130, which was the last number you mentioned."

No. 18. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Sept.* 26, 1766

"My very dear Son,

"Yours of the 24th I received in course. I am glad to find thereby that upon the whole dear Mary is no worse than when her mamma left her: that abstracting from her folly of sitting up too long and fatiguing herself by walking too much in the little room, whereby it seems she has not been quite so well since, symptoms seem to continue as formerly. I hope her pulse by this time is come below 120. Do not forget to inform me in your next of this and of other circumstances that may have occurred either upon the favourable or disagreeable side, because I desire to regulate myself at a throne of grace according to your information about her. My wife is not quite so well as she was before;* but I hope the effects of her fatigue, and the anxiety she was in about her tedious journey, will soon wear off. She bids you tell your spouse, that though the situation both of your family and ours required her return, and that though absent as to bodily presence, yet a large portion of her heart remained with her dear daughter in distress, whom she cannot relieve, till the Lord himself condescend to do it in his own time.

My dear Son,
Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,
James Fisher."

No. 19. MR. JOHN GRAY TO THE REV. JAMES FISHER.

"*Edinburgh, Oct.* 3, 1766.

"Rev. and very dear Father,

"The doctors have, I am afraid, but little hopes of her [Mrs. Gray's] recovery. As she does not seem to be mending she cannot but be weaker. However it is wonderful to see her in the way she is, considering the severity of her trouble and the length thereof. She has need of patience, poor woman. The Lord has laid a heavy rod on her. But we hope she will not be left comfortless under it. She was inquiring when the Synod is; she expects to see you then. Two or three times she has been talking of it. She said you would come to see her as much as the Synod. Erskine is thriving very well. Our endeared love to Mrs. Fisher and you and all the family. I am,

Rev. and dear Father,
Your afflicted Son,
John Gray."

* Vide Letter 17.

No. 20. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow, Oct.* 6, 1766.

"My very dear Son,

"The hopes I had conceived of the probability of my dear daughter's recovery made me lay aside all thoughts of coming to the ensuing Synod: travelling in any shape not being so agreeable to me now as it was some years ago. But upon the receipt of your last, wherein you tell me that two or three times she had been talking of her expecting to see me at the Synod, and particularly that she said that I would come to see her as much as to attend the Synod, you may now acquaint her that her mother, who was very loth to leave her, is fond I should come in, (since it is her desire,) and that I should stay about eight days with her if we are both spared. And you may assure her, that if it were not to wait on her for a little time under such long continued distress, the Synod would not see me at this time. I resolve, if the Lord will, to set off in one of our Glasgow flys on the morning of Tuesday the 14th, because, after preaching all day on Sabbath, I would be unfit for taking journey on Monday morning. Meanwhile let us hear this week how she is. Our endeared love to you all. I am,

My dear Son,

Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,

James Fisher."

No. 21. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Oct.* 24, 1766.

"My very dear Son,

"I was yesterday in the Fly all day alone, and, excepting a little jolting to my body, I had otherwise as pleasant a passage as ever I had in my lifetime for as much time. I arrived at five o'clock in perfect health, and am noway fatigued this day. I found all this family well, and gave them as true and candid an account of dear Mary as I could. Let me know if Mr. Moubray has heightened the vents, and how she continues to be, if Dr. Rutherford has called, or any material circumstance about her. Tell her I will write her next week. She will not readily doubt our sympathy. Our sincere love to you, Miss Babby, and Annie.* I am,

Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,

James Fisher."

* Miss Ann Fisher, who was waiting on her sister.

No. 22. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Nov.* 18, 1766.

"My very dear Son,

"Since the last accounts you give of my dear daughter, I have given up all hopes of life in this world, though I make no doubt of her title to eternal life in the world to come, secured in virtue of her union with Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness. In regard no letters came this day, (your last being on the night of Saturday the 15th,) my wife and I were fond to conclude that possibly there might be a change to the better; but she having taken so many turns, we are afraid of worse accounts. We are deeply concerned for her, and tenderly sympathize with her, and were both of us this day regretting that by reason of the distance, and other circumstances, we cannot be with her in the time of her extremity; but we desire to devolve her on his hand who is the everlasting Father and unchangeable Friend, and who only can be a suitable help to her in time of her need. Into his hands we desire to commit her both soul and body, trusting that they are both his own, and shall appear among His in the day he makes up his jewels. My wife and I are uneasy about the breaking of the skin. It will certainly be very painful and distracting to a dying person. I could wish you to desire Dr. Macfarlane or Mr. Adie to ask at Dr. Black, who is now Professor of Chymistry in your College, the name of the powder and ointment which he prescribed for Mr. David Pagan. All of us sympathize with you, and have you all fondly in remembrance. I am,

Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,

James Fisher."

No. 23. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Nov.* 22, 1766, *near to Three in the morning.*

"My very dear Son,

"The bearer came about two o'clock this morning with the afflicting account of dear Mary's death yesterday morning. It is absolutely impossible, in a rational way, that I can come in to her burial on Monday, after the fatigue of the Sabbath, having none to preach for me. And though it were delayed till Tuesday morning it would be the same thing as to the journey on Monday: besides, I am to preach at Mr. Campbell's ordination at Stirling next week, and to go off in a chaise for that

place on Tuesday morning. Not being able to sit up long for fear of incapacitating me for my studies through the day, I shall write you in the beginning of the week at more length. I think the burial should be on Monday at any hour that is customary in the place. May the Lord himself comfort you and us against grief on every side! I am,

My dear Son,

Your very affectionate and afflicted Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 24. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, Nov.* 24, 1766.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I doubt not but you are fully satisfied that my not coming to Edinburgh this day to attend my dear daughter's funeral flowed entirely from my inability at this period of life to set off so early on a journey of such a distance after the fatigue of preaching all day yesterday, though I had not had Mr. Campbell's ordination to attend this week at Stirling on Thursday, where I am appointed to conclude the work of the day.

"You have lost a well-disposed and affectionate wife, and her parents a fond and dutiful child. Under such a trying dispensation to you and us, the discoveries she gave of an interest in the Lord Jesus, and acquaintance with the vitals of religion, may afford no small comfort both to you and us. The tender care you have had of her, and the expense you have been at in the use of all lawful means for preserving her life, will preserve the same regard in this family towards you as if she were to the fore. And no doubt but the remembrance of her will enhance both your affection and ours to dear little Erskine, the only remains of her she has left behind. Oh, what a pleasure is it that our Lord Jesus liveth for evermore, and is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever—his righteousness and fulness invariably the same! It is but a short while till each of us go home ourselves. I doubt not but in heaven the redeemed will know one another. The disciples knowing Moses and Elias on the Mount is some foundation for it. Let us mutually sympathize with one another at a throne of grace, which is the best sympathy.

"There is a chaise come this evening from Stirling to take Mr. Campbell and me there to-morrow, because the Presbytery meets upon the Wednesday before the ordination. I design to return on Tuesday next week. Meantime you may write my wife by the return of the post how you, Annie, and Miss Beugo

are, after this melancholy event, and how dear Erskine is thriving. Poor child! she will never know, but by dull report, that ever she had a mamma, who was so excessively fond of her. We have our endeared love to you all. I am,

My dear Son,

Your much afflicted and affected Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 25. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow*, *Dec.* 8, 1766.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I stayed in Stirling with Mr. Campbell the Sabbath after his ordination and preached in the afternoon. He came off with me for Glasgow on Tuesday last week, and preached to a very throng auditory upon Thursday the 4th current, the day appointed by our Synod for a Thanksgiving, and returned to Stirling next day. We are all in perfect health at present. It will no doubt be a melancholy time with you. And indeed a moderate vent to natural affection, upon the loss of the nearest friend a man can have on earth, is not only warrantable but laudable; providing always there be a due submission to the sovereign will of adorable Providence. One thing may give some comfort to you and to us, and that is, that I hope we have no ground to sorrow as those who have no hope. The Lord hath been pleased to take from us a valuable temporal blessing; but to balance this, there are two things he will never take away. First, his love—for wherever he pitches it, he will rest in it; and then his special gifts of grace, particularly the unspeakable gift of his Son Christ Jesus, and all the spiritual blessings that go along with him. All these are absolutely irrevocable. Since then there is infinitely more to the fore than what is taken away, let us encourage ourselves in the Lord, who has said, 'I am thy God,'—the word that was so sweet to our now deceased Friend.

"Dear Son, you may be assured that the same regard and affection in this family will be maintained towards you as when your dear spouse was alive. The care and concern you exercised about the dead will not be easily forgotten by the living. If your business were not throng at present, we think it might contribute to your health, after the late event of providence, to take a ride to this place for a few days. Meantime let us hear from you in course how you all are. Send word how dear little Erskine is. All of us join in our endeared love to every one of you. I am,

My dear Son,

Your very affectionate and sympathizing Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 26. TO MISS ANNIE FISHER, EDINBURGH.

"*Glasgow, Dec.* 16, 1766.

"My dear Annie,

"Your sister's death, to which you were a witness, is a loud call to prepare for the same event, by flying in to the Lord Jesus, as the only hope set before you. Consider, my dear child, that God has in the promise made a gift of him to you in particular, as well as to others who hear the gospel, and nothing will be a suitable preparation for death but a receiving him by faith, or an appropriating him to yourself as the Lord your righteousness. You have as good a title to him as any of Adam's family ever had. . . . .

"No doubt we would be fond enough to have you home, but our sympathy with Mr. Gray is such, that, if you keep your health, we are satisfied you stay with him for some time, especially as, it seems, Miss Babby Beugo is gone. We were sorry to hear you had got a little of a cold; we hope it will wear off; only be sure to take special care of yourself, by not going out in surly, tempestuous weather, without necessity, in the winter season.

"I hope and am persuaded, my dear Annie, that you don't omit prayers to God morning and evening, and reading a part of the Scriptures, which contain the very food of your soul. And, on the Sabbath evenings, read the Explication of the Assembly's Catechism. The last edition of it is published by Messrs. Gray & Alston. It is far preferable to the former editions, and, after you have read it carefully, by examining yourself upon the Index, you will know if you understand the most material questions.

"Your mamma, Alie, Peggy, and I, and all of us, join in our endeared love to you and your disconsolate Brother-in-law, Mr. Gray, of whom we suppose that you take as good care as possible. I am,

My dear Annie,
Your very affectionate Father,
James Fisher."

No. 27. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow, 5th Feb.*, 1767.

"Very dear Son,

"I desire to bless the Lord that my recovery continues. The pain of my ankles and feet, which was very smarting when you was here, is quite gone, only the swelling and feebleness

remain, which I hope will be removed in the Lord's time if he has farther service for me. I lie went out yesterday in a chaise with me about three miles from the town, at the doctor's directions, for abating the swelling, and we returned without lighting. I think this day I am rather the better of it. Tell my dear Annie that she needs be in no uneasiness about me, for I hope in an ordinary way I will soon be as well as ever I was. I am,

My very dear Son,

Your most affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER.

"P. S.—Please offer my dutiful respects to Mr. Patison and his family."

No. 28. TO MISS ANN FISHER.

"*Glasgow*, 19*th Feb.*, 1767, *Seven o'clock at Night.*

"MY VERY DEAR ANNIE,

"Just now I received from Mr. Lang your brother Mr. Gray's letter, wherein I find you are very anxious about me: but I assure you, you have no reason; for I am recovering more and more strength every day. I know not if I will have time to answer all the questions my son-in-law puts to me, the post-hour being at eight. Only you may believe that I sleep well, have a good appetite, can walk through the whole house up and down stairs, and all without a staff—and sometimes walk round my kirk. The swelling is a great deal less. I have this day thrown off the flannels and put on my stockings. The pain is quite gone two weeks ago. In a word, I am very well in my health, and resolve to wait on our Presbytery, which meets next week. So that I hope this account will fully satisfy you. We are glad to hear that dear Erskine has got two more teeth, and that some others are coming forwards, and that Mr. Gray has got a house in the Lawnmercat, well-aired and lighted, to the South. The hour is now come, at least is near. Our endeared love to you and Mr. Gray. I am,

My dear Annie,

Your very affectionate loving Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 29. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow*, 5*th March*, 1767.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I continue still in the mending way. My limbs are not yet come to the small measure of strength and agility they

had before I fell bad; but by the Lord's sparing goodness they are advancing gradually towards it. My people thought that my preaching for some time yet to come would mar the completing of my recovery, and therefore they addressed the Presbytery, who cheerfully granted me supply till their next meeting, which is on the 7th of April, against which time I would fain hope the Lord will enable me to the discharge of my ministerial office among my people, at least now and then. By yours to Peggie, received yesterday, we were somewhat alarmed about dear little Erskine. As we are very anxious about the dear babe, be sure as soon as possible to send us word how she is. My wife, Alie, and Peggie join me in our best wishes to you and Annie and dear Erskine, of whom we will be very impatient to hear. I am,

My dear Son,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 30. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, 8th April*, 1767.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I preached that week-day you heard of, and was no worse for it. I dare not but acknowledge the Lord's goodness that I am daily recovering more strength, though by slow degrees. Mr. Donaldson's death was a vast loss not to this family only, but to the whole congregation, for he was a most useful man. I am,

Your very loving and affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 31. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow, 13th Oct.*, 1767.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"It is now about two weeks since we heard from you. We are anxious to know (Annie in particular) if you are in a confirmed state of health, and if your bodily ailments are quite removed. As to our soul maladies, you know whom to apply to for a cure of them; and, oh! what matter of thankfulness that he is a Physician always at hand, and heals infallibly and at the same time freely! We want to know if dear Erskine continues in entire health. That dear infant has too much room in my heart. May the Lord preserve her to glorify him on the earth. . . Our winter Sacrament here is to be, if the

Lord will, upon the second Sabbath of November ensuing. If yours is not on the same day, we would be glad to see you on that occasion.

"Having the opportunity of Mr. Crombie, I have enclosed a letter from Ralph, which I received about eight or ten days ago. . . Mr. Campbell came on Wednesday, and went away with Peggie after he had preached on Thursday. . . ."

No. 32. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow*, 15*th Dec.*, 1767.

"My very dear Son,

"With a grieved heart, I acquaint you of the death of my eldest son, Ebenezer, at New-Bern, in the province of North Carolina, about the middle of August last. Of fifteen children we have now remaining but four. It is, however, the Lord's doing, and therefore it becomes us, like Aaron, to hold our peace, or, with the Psalmist, to put our hands on our mouths, and be silent. It was only yesterday I received the above melancholy news from a gentleman in Maryland, in whose employ my son died. This, added to the many sore hearts of another kind which my wife and I have had, cannot but be a great affliction to us in our old age. . . Meantime, to balance the above dark providences, I have got very comfortable accounts by a merchant of this place arrived last week from Kingston in Jamaica, that Ralph is both well and doing extremely well, and is much beloved in the place. Thus the Lord mixes mercy with judgment in his dispensations, and gives us occasion to sing of both. We all cordially join in our endeared love to you and dear little Erskine, and will be glad to know at your conveniency how you both are. I am,

Dear Son,
Your very affectionate Father,
James Fisher."

No. 33. TO THE SAME.

"*Glasgow*, 13*th March*, 1768.

"Very dear Son,

"I have wrote to Peggie to come home to Glasgow upon the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday after your Sacrament. You will see the reasons at large in her letter. Annie's indisposition and Mrs. Fisher's tenderness are the sum of them; which I hope you will sustain as relevant. I am informed your people have chosen several elders, but that neither

Mr. Alexander Moubray nor you are among the number, and that your partner, Mr. Alston, declines accepting. I think he is wrong in so doing. He knows not what services he might do to the Lord Jesus, in that office, more ways than one,—not only in visiting the sick, but when chosen to represent the Session in the judicatories. I am at present in tolerable health, but I find the infirmities of age daily increasing on me, which are certainly a loud call to prepare for death, or rather to be instant at a throne of grace, that the Lord himself, whose work it is, would make me meet for the eternal, uninterrupted enjoyment of himself. I think there is nothing NOW I so much desire. I am glad to find that Mr. Patison is so well recovered. He has no less than three ministers from this Presbytery at his Sacrament, viz. Messrs. Belfrage, Moir, and Campbell. I wish earnestly that the Lord himself may be remarkably present, both with ministers and people. We rejoice to hear that dear little Erskine is such a thriving child. May the Lord form her early for himself, that she may be honoured to glorify him on earth as well as eternally above. We all join in our endeared love to you. I am,

My dear Son,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 34. TO MRS. CAMPBELL.

"*Glasgow, May* 27, 1768.

"MY VERY DEAR ALIE,

"We are extremely glad to hear that you are in such a healthy state. Be not afraid of what is before your hand; for a gracious and promising God has said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'

"Your mamma and Annie join me in our most tender regard to you,

My dear Alie,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER."

No. 35. TO MISS ANNIE FISHER, AT THE REV. MR. CAMPBELL'S, STIRLING.

"MY DEAR ANNIE,

"Your mamma, knowing your anxiety about your parents, was much vexed I did not write you last week; but my

mind being so much taken up about my studies for the Sabbath, it was involuntarily omitted: however, I have the pleasure of acquainting you now, that both of us, by the Lord's goodness, are very well considering the growing infirmities of our advanced years.—I preached yesterday forenoon and afternoon, and cannot say I was much fatigued, only your mamma would have me go to bed an hour sooner than ordinary, and I was very well refreshed when I rose this morning.

"My dear child, as you have the opportunity of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper next Lord's day, let not the want of present sensible comfort, or of such a lively frame as you would desire to be in,—I say, let not your apprehension of the want of these, or such a measure of them as you would wish, be any impediment in the way of obeying the express command of our blessed Lord, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' The words of our Lord to Martha, John xi. 40, come presently into my mind, 'Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?' O seek to be content to be an eternal recipient or receiver out of the inexhaustible fulness that is in Christ. Be much in secret prayer, meditation, and self-searching, and 'the God of all grace be with you.'

"Your mother and I join in our most endeared love to you and your Brother-in-law. I am,

My dear Annie,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"*Glasgow, Monday, 11th June*, 1770."

No. 36. TO MR. JOHN GRAY.

"*Glasgow, 1st Oct.*, 1771.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"The question you proposed to me in your last for correction is in Part II., p. 223, Quest. 13. From the judicious hint you gave, I think the whole will run smoother, and be more plain in the following manner:—

"*Quest.* 13. What may we learn from the necessity of Christ's blessing, and of the Spirit's working, in order to the efficacy of the Sacraments?

"*Ans.* It teacheth us, that our whole dependence for the blessing—whether upon ourselves when we partake of the Sacrament of the Supper, or upon our children when we are sponsors for them in baptism—should be only on Christ alone, and the saving influences and operations of his Spirit to accompany his own institutions; and therefore, our partaking of these solemn

ordinances, dispensed by some ministers to the slighting of them as dispensed by others equally sound and faithful, though perhaps, in our esteem, somewhat inferior in outward gifts, says, upon the matter, that the efficacy of the Sacraments depends somehow upon the administrator, and not upon the blessing of Christ alone, quite contrary to mind of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. iii. 7. 'So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.'

"We were glad to hear you got both safely home on the evening of the day you left us. With our joint best wishes to you both, I am,

My dear Son,

Your very affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 37. TO MISS ANN FISHER.

"*Glasgow, Saturday, 1st August*, 1772.

"MY VERY DEAR ANNIE,

"Knowing your affectionate anxiety about your papa and the rest of the family when absent from them, I thought it my duty to write you a few lines by the Monday's runner from this place to Edinburgh, which will reach you on Tuesday morning, (for I have no freedom to send a letter to the post-office on Sabbath night,) to confirm your sister's account of our continued welfare. Being to preach to-morrow, I have no time to insist; only I hope to hear that you have attended the solemnity at Dalkeith, and joined there according to your resolution before you left this place. You have been much upon my heart every day since I saw you. I can freely say, I never forget you in my prayers; particularly that the ordinances you designed to attend might be like full breasts to your soul from whence you might drink in the sincere milk of the word freely and plentifully. I told Mr. Campbell when here, that if Mr. Gray would come along with you to Stirling on his way to Glasgow, you would gladly wait on him and his spouse. My compliments to Miss Pagan, the Miss Huttons, particularly Miss Sibby, my acquaintance, &c. I will firmly expect you home on Thursday or Friday next week at the farthest. The Lord be with you. I am,

My very dear Child,

Your very affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER."

No. 38. TO MRS. WARDLAW, DALKEITH.

"My very dear Annie,

"I acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter, about ten or twelve days after your arrival at Dalkeith, and at the same time must confess I have been far too tardy in giving a return. But I hope that my loving and affectionate daughter will not impute this to the smallest abatement of my former regard and esteem for her; but (which is the truth of the matter) to one of the common infirmities of old age, namely, that it cannot with pleasure move out of its ordinary circle, or deviate from the course to which it has for some time been habituated. If my fond daughter does not sustain the above as a relevant apology, then I shall endeavour to make amends for the future by writing as frequently as circumstances will allow. To this I look upon myself as the more strictly bound, when I reflect upon the tender and solicitous care you took of me, night and day, from the death of your valuable mother to the day of your happy marriage with such an agreeable husband; concerning whom it gives me great pleasure to observe, that you remark the kindness of Providence in giving you one just to your mind; and I believe I may venture to say for him that he thinks he has got a wife of the same stamp, just to his mind likewise. If these are the steady sentiments of both, you are a happy pair indeed; and I trust that this kind of happiness I speak of, namely mutual love and esteem, shall continue while the present relation between you shall subsist. But O remember that death will dissolve it, as it does all earthly relations whatsoever; and therefore we should each of us ardently desire above all things to be united to our glorious Redeemer, by having his finished righteousness imputed to us for our justification, and his Spirit of holiness implanted in us for our sanctification, and then nothing shall ever separate us from his love.—I suppose you have heard of Jenny Donaldson's death. She was buried last Friday afternoon. She was a very kind and sympathizing girl. I went to the house in a chair, but could not accompany the funeral. Mr. Richardson was yesterday ordained at Crawfordsdyke. Mr. Henderson began, Mr. Gilfillan preached the ordination sermon, and Mr. Thomson concluded. Their house at Carsedyke not having galleries did not near contain the people; therefore, possibly by Mr. Buchanan's means, they obtained the privilege of the Kirk in Greenock, where the ordination was performed. All of

us here join in our best wishes and cordial regard to each in your family and all their connections. I am,

My very dear Annie,
Your very affectionate and loving Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"*Glasgow*, 11*th March*, 1773.

"Your letter to me had no date, which was not of a piece with your usual exactness."

No. 39. TO MR. AND MRS. WARDLAW, DALKEITH.

"MY VERY DEAR SON AND DAUGHTER,

"Would my Annie be at the pains to acquire my short-hand, whereof I have furnished her with a complete index, the correspondence betwixt us would be vastly more frequent than it is like to be, at least on my part—there being nothing more irksome to me, at this period of life, than to be obliged to write my sentiments in long-hand, after I have been for the most part of my lifetime accustomed to the short.—Ever since the commencement of my present connection with Dalkeith, I have considered the situation of my dear Annie as every way most comfortable. Besides a competency of the good things of this life, a most fond and affectionate husband, a most careful and industrious aunt, a most loving and obliging sister, and a diligent and active brother, all under the same roof, and cordially conspiring for promoting the interest and good of the whole, are circumstances wherein the temporal happiness of any family cannot but in a great measure consist: and if to this is added a participation of the special and saving blessings contained in the promises of the new covenant, I know nothing more can be desired either with reference to this life or that which is to come.—My dear children, you are privileged with a pure gospel ministry. Your worthy pastor does not shun to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, according to the measure of the gift of Christ conferred on him; therefore I pray you receive his message as coming from the Master himself, as our Lord said concerning his disciples, Matt. x. 40. 'He that receiveth you receiveth me;' do all in your power to strengthen his hands and encourage his heart in the Lord's work amongst you; and know, for your encouragement, that every office of kindness you thus do unto him, our Lord Jesus will one day reward as done to himself. You have his own word for it, Matt. xxv. 40. 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it to me.'—I know that my dear son-in-law has already been very useful in the Associate Congregation

of Dalkeith as to the management of their secular affairs; but I would fondly wish before I die to see him still more serviceable, both to them and to the church of Christ, by moving in a more extensive sphere than ever hitherto he has done;—I mean, by his not obstinately refusing to accept the office of the Eldership when called thereunto. If the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon him any measure of gifts and parts, whether natural or acquired, (however small they may be in his own estimation,) I would earnestly entreat that he don't venture to keep them laid up in a napkin, but lay them out for his Master's use as Providence may give him an opportunity.—With very best wishes for every one in the family and all their connections, I am,

My dear Son and Daughter,

Your fond affectionate Father,

JAMES FISHER.

"*Glasgow, Sept.* 2, 1773.

"Remember me kindly to Mr. Hutton, his spouse, and daughters."

No. 40. TO MRS. WARDLAW.

"MY VERY DEAR ANNIE,

"Next unto the comfortable emanations of the divine love to my own soul, there is nothing in this life can give me more sensible pleasure than to hear of your and your dear husband's welfare; that both of you enjoy such a continued measure of bodily health, as I also trust your souls are in a prosperous way: for however valuable temporal mercies are in themselves, spiritual ones are infinitely more so. We are but cumberers of the ground, an insupportable burden to the earth that bears us, if we are not living a life of faith on the Son of God, and receiving out of his fulness and grace for grace. I suppose my ingenuity and candour will not be suspected when I say that, from the bottom of my heart, I sincerely wish all manner of happiness, both spiritual and temporal, to the whole of your family, and all the relatives and connections of it; though no doubt the ties of nature and blood cannot miss to warm my affections to my very dear Annie, and to the fruit of her womb, in a very peculiar manner, not so much because he bears my name as because he is her son. But I hope he shall not long continue to be your only son. I trust that both sisters and brothers shall be added to him, all of whom the Lord shall form for himself, to show forth his praise for a while here, and eternally hereafter. This is my ardent request in your behalf, that you may be the joyful mother of many children; and though the Lord should take some of them from you in infancy or non-

age, or even in the prime of life, as was the case in each of these respects with your mother and me; yet what a comfort is it to think of being the instruments of bringing one or more of the Redeemer's children into the world, and nursing them up for him? I make no doubt but it will be a part of the happiness of the redeemed in heaven to see their near friends and relatives possessed for ever of the same inconceivable glory with themselves.—With our most endeared love to one and all of you, as if particularly named, I am,

My dear Annie,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"*Glasgow*, 20*th May*, 1774."

No. 41. TO MR. WILLIAM WARDLAW, MERCHANT IN DALKEITH.

"MY VERY DEAR SON,

"I am sorry to acquaint you that all my four grandchildren are at present bad of the chincough—a distemper just now raging among the young ones in this place. Our doctors in this city are unanimously of opinion that a change of the air is a very sovereign remedy against that violent ailment.

"It has happened in providence that old Mrs. Ewing, the grandmother, out of her excessive care about her grandchild, Humphry, (the same name with her deceased husband,) had taken a country-house, for the summer season, upon Clyde side, about a measured mile and a half below this town. After proper remedies were administered to Jeanie and Peggie, (the first who took it,) we sent them down with a maid to their grandmother, of whose anxious care about them, both by night and day, we were quite well assured. In about the space of two weeks the trouble abated on these two; but then it began with great violence upon my dear little Annie, who was at home on her mother's breast. The trouble increasing, your sister, Ewing, took her along with her to the grandmother's, who thinks herself happy to have them all about her. Wattie sleeps always here, for he puts off and on my clothes very punctually, and makes a short start in the evening of every day to see how his wife and children do. Mary Erskine takes care of the house and sleeps in the tent-bed beside me. It is a singular mercy, that, though our children are in distress, there is no dangerous symptom as yet appearing. The post-hour approaches. I must break off by commending you all to God, and to the word of his grace. I am,

My very dear Son,
Your very affectionate Father,
JAMES FISHER.

"*Glasgow*, *June* 10, 1774."

No. 42. TO MR. AND MRS. WARDLAW.

"My very dear Son and Daughter,

"No sooner than this very day before noon, we received both your melancholy letters at one and the same time. The first, addressed to Mr. Ewing, acquainting us that you had sent dear little Jamie with his maid to a careful hand in the country within a little space of your town,—that his father, mother, and Aunt Wardlaw saw him there on the Tuesday—which I suppose was the 28th of the last—in pretty good health and spirits; but taking a sudden feverish turn on the Wednesday the 29th, you took him home again, and in your letter directed to me, received at the same time as the above, you write that the fever increased intermixed with frequent and severe nervous fits of the convulsive kind, which soon reduced his delicate and beautiful body to the dust of death, about half-an-hour past two in the afternoon of Saturday. I never had the pleasure of seeing this dear infant in this life; but I hope to see him, and to know him too, at the resurrection of the just, when the whole ransomed multitude which no man can number shall surround the throne of the Lamb, to each of whom, young and old, he will say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.' . . My very dear Annie, I know you have very strong natural affections, and they cannot but be very sensibly touched on this mournful event. But remember that you have a very fond and affectionate husband, who errs in his love to you, still to the fore, and another son upon your breasts. If therefore you would have these preserved to you,—if you would not impair the health and comfort of your dear husband, and endanger the health of your surviving child,—if you would avoid these evils, which I know you deprecate,—moderate, I pray you, again I say, moderate your excessive grief, and submit to the sovereign will of adorable Providence, who does all things well. I trust God will abundantly bless you both, and more than make up the present loss by redoubled manifestations of himself to your souls, as your own God and everlasting inheritance. Only beware of repining at what he has done. Has not the Potter power over the clay?—All of us join in our sympathy and best wishes towards one and all of your family. And I can freely say that, such as they are, you are not forgotten in our daily prayers. I am,

My very dear Son and Daughter,
Your very affectionate Father,
James Fisher.

"*Glasgow, Monday, April* 3, 1775."

ADDENDA.

The following extracts from "the Register of the Kirk-Session of Kinclaven," will not be without their interest to some readers:—

"Att the Kirk of Kinclaven, Dec. 23d, 1725. The which day Mr. James Fisher was ordained minister of this parish of Kinclaven; and the Revd. Mr. Robert Bowis, minister of the gospel att Rattray, presided in that action, who preached upon the fi[f]th verse of the fourth chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy."—"Collected two pounds Scots, £02 : 00 : 00."

"Kinclaven Kirk, 26th [Dec.], 1725. Sermon here this day, being the first Sabbath after our minister's ordination amongst us, who preached on Romans v. chap. 30 and 32 verses.—Collected for the poor eleven pence, £00 : 11 : 00."

"Kinclaven Kirk, Jan. 17, 1726. Collected for the poor five pence.—This day the minister intimated his design of beginning a course of visitation of families."

"Kirktown of Kinclaven, July 24th, 1726.—"* ——— Unto all this the Session agreed except William Kea, who for this reason plainly told the Session he would never henceforth sitt with them, and thereupon withdrew in a very indecent manner." —"Given a student recommended by our Synod twelve pence, £00 : 12 : 00."

"Kinclaven, June 12th, 1727. Sermon this day by Mr. Dow, a probationer. The minister having gone to Kinco (Kincock) this day in ye time of lecture by Mr. Dow, to see how the Sabbath was observed in that place, and finding severals upon the town loan in companies, and reporting it to the Session, the Session judge yt it will be sufficient at ye time for ye minister to admonish them privately, over and above as he spoke to them this day; but finding —— ——, one of the elders, upon the town loan discoursing with another man; the Session are of opinion that his carriage, being an elder, may harden others in that sin, resolve to take up that affair to consideration the first time he is present."

The Rev. James Innes of Merton, whose name is appended to "the Representation and Petition to the General Assembly 1732," was father of the Rev. James Innes the patriarchal minister of Gifford, and grandfather of my esteemed and beloved friend, William Innes, D.D., who "hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself." Psal. cii. 28.

* The preceding part of the Minute refers to the agreement as to the gallery, the erection of which was made necessary by Mr. Fisher's popularity, that the sittings in it should be let at the yearly rent of 2s. 6d. Scots (2½d. sterling).

MEMORIALS

OF THE

REV. JAMES FISHER.

Selections from his Writings.

SERMON I.*

THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF TRUTH.

PROV. xxiii. 23. — "Buy the truth, and sell it not."

THIS book of Proverbs contains a vast variety of short and comprehensive precepts, of which this in our text is one, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." In which words you have, (1.) A notable bargain, and that is "truth." (2.) The purchase of this bargain enjoined, "Buy the truth." (3.) The persons who are called to make this purchase, implied; and they are certainly all those who are privileged with a revelation of God's mind and will in this everlasting gospel. (4.) The high value we are to put upon the bargain when bought, in these words, "Sell it not;" by no means quit with it again. As truth can never be bought at too dear a rate, so it can never be sold at the true value. God himself is the great and sole proprietor of this rich treasure; it is of him we are commanded to buy it, and to put such an high value upon the purchase, as to refuse the greatest price that can be offered for the disposure of it. According to this view of the words, I deduce from them the following

* Preached on a day of solemn fasting appointed by the Associate Presbytery, at Finwick, March 23, 1738.

DOCTRINE,—'That it is the duty of all the hearers of this gospel to purchase the truth at any rate, and by no means, or for no price whatsoever, to part with it.' Prov. viii. 11. "Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Chap. iv. 7. "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

In speaking upon this subject, I shall essay (as the Lord shall give countenance) to observe the following order. Inquire, (1.) What we are to understand by "the truth;" (2.) What it is to "buy" the truth; (3.) Who they are that "sell" the truth; and then, Deduce some inferences for application of the doctrine.

I. I am to inquire what we are to understand by "the truth." Truth is sometimes in Scripture put for Christ himself; and sometimes for the whole revelation of his will, whether with respect to the doctrine, worship, discipline or government of his house: in both which respects we are to buy the truth, and not to sell it.

1*st.* I say, Truth is put for the Lord Christ himself, John xiv. 6. "I am the truth." Here it may be inquired, In what respect Christ is called the truth? I answer, He is the truth of all the types and shadows under the Old Testament, John i. 17. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." They all pointed at him, and received their full accomplishment in him, who is the end of the law for righteousness. He is the truth of all the Scripture-prophecies concerning the Messiah; for they were all literally fulfilled in him, Acts x. 43. "To him gave all the prophets witness." He is the truth of all the promises; for he is the sum and substance of them, and they are all in him "yea and amen." He is the truth of all the names that are given him in Scripture. He is called JESUS, and accordingly has saved an innumerable company from their sins, Rev. vii. 9. He is called CHRIST, the Messiah, or the Anointed; for the "Spirit is not given by measure unto him," John iii. 34. He is called IMMANUEL, "God with us," Mat. i. 23; for he is not

only God on our side, Psal. xlvi. 7, but also, as the foundation thereof, he is God in our nature, John i. 14. "The Word was made flesh." He is called the WONDERFUL, Isa. ix. 6; for he is the wonder of angels and men. He is called the COUNSELLOR, and accordingly there are "hid in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He is called the MIGHTY GOD, and accordingly many are the mighty works that he has done: he has "travelled in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save." The legions of the prince of darkness have been vanquished by his victorious arm; the unbelief, enmity, and other spiritual wickednesses that are in the heart, have been made to give way, upon his entrance into the soul in the day of his power: he has ransomed from the power of the grave, and has made death a plain passage for the redeemed from among men to "go up to Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads." Again, he is called the EVERLASTING FATHER; for many children has he begotten, nourished up, and brought into glory, Heb. ii. 13. "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." He is called the PRINCE OF PEACE; and accordingly he has "made peace by the blood of his cross," Col. i. 20. And, to add no more upon this head, he is called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xxiii. 6; and accordingly he has "brought in an everlasting righteousness," in virtue whereof we are "made the righteousness of God in him." So that Christ is the truth of all the names that are given him in Scripture. But, moreover, he is the great recipient of all divine truth, as Mediator, in order to his being the great means of conveying of it to the children of men, John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The words of mercy and salvation had never sounded in the ears of lost sinners, had not God spoken them to us through the channel of the blood of Immanuel; for it is in this way that "God hath spoken to us by his Son," Heb. i. 2. Finally, Christ is the truth, in regard he "bears witness to the truth;" John xviii. 37. "To this end was I

born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." And there are these three great truths, among others, that he bears witness unto: (1.) That all mankind have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and that they were utterly incapable to help and relieve themselves. This he has witnessed, by coming in our nature to "seek and to save that which was lost." (2.) That the justice of God is satisfied, and an honourable passage for mercy unto sinners opened in the channel of his blood. To this he has witnessed by his resurrection from the dead, and sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (3.) That as he is the gift of God to sinners of all sorts, so "him that cometh unto him he will in nowise cast out." This he witnesseth daily in the dispensation of the gospel. These are a few reasons why Christ is called THE TRUTH; and indeed he is the great truth, which we are called to "buy," as we shall afterwards essay to make appear.

2*dly*, By "the truth," we are to understand the whole of the revelation of God's mind and will, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; so the word "truth" is frequently taken: 2 Cor. xiii. 8. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth;" Gal. v. 7. "Who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth?" Titus i. 1. "And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." And we find the Scriptures frequently called "the word of truth:" 2 Tim. ii. 15. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" James i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." So that the truth which we are to buy, and not to sell, is the whole of that truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures, which we are to believe concerning God, and which relates to the duties that God requires of man; which may be comprised under the four general heads following.

1*st*, The truth concerning doctrine: or, all those truths relating to the nature, perfections, and works of God,—the creation of man in a state of innocency,—his fall into

a state of sin and misery,—the way and manner of his recovery and redemption through Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us,—and his endless happiness or misery in the life to come: Or all those truths concerning the breach of the covenant of works by the first Adam, as a federal head,—the fulfilment of it by Christ the second Adam, as the representative of his elect seed, both as to the precept and penalty of it; in consequence whereof grace and glory, and every good thing, is offered to mankind lost, in the way of a covenant of grace,—which covenant is full, well-ordered in all things and sure, and, with respect unto us, absolutely free. In a word, all those truths concerning the contrivance, purchase, application, and consummation of the work of redemption, to the glory of God and the salvation of the sinner;—a summary account of which truths, agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, you have in our excellent Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, which we earnestly recommend unto your serious and deliberate perusal, that so you may be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. i. 10.

Now, since I have mentioned our Confession of Faith, I cannot but take this opportunity of warning you against those who set themselves in opposition to all Confessions, whether more openly or more slyly. Some, out of a pretended regard to the Holy Scriptures, reject all public standards, as if they were exalted to equal authority with the Scriptures themselves; others pour contempt upon them, because they are designed to support supernatural truth, in opposition to the various shapes in which error and heresy has appeared in the world. But the plain reason of all this outcry against Confessions is just this, that Free-thinkers of all sorts cannot endure to have their wild and extravagant notions circumscribed, and hemmed in, by the pure doctrines of the word, brought together and compared in a methodical chain of divine truth, which is the very nature and design of Confessions. The Scriptures are unquestionably the only perfect rule of faith and man-

ners, containing not only a plain revelation of all those truths necessary to be believed and practised in order to salvation, but also a clear refutation of all the errors that ever have been or shall be broached in the world; but then these are so scattered through the volume of this holy book, that the collecting and digesting of them, under proper heads, is necessary for the edifying of the church of Christ and convincing gainsayers; and therefore Confessions, which are nothing else but a collection of divine truths, by comparing of one scripture with another, cannot but be the eye-sore of men of corrupt minds, who cannot endure to "come to the light" of God's word, "lest their deeds" and principles "should be made manifest."

2*dly*, There is the truth concerning the worship of God,—that a God in Christ is the only object of a sinner's worship, Matt. iv. 10. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." That he is to be worshipped, in the use of those ordinances which he has prescribed in his word, as the only means of worship,—such as prayer, Phil. iv. 6; reading and searching the Scriptures, John v. 39; preaching and hearing of the word, Rom. x. 14, 15, 17; singing of psalms, Eph. v. 18, 19; administering and receiving the sacraments, Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23—27; fasting, Luke v. 35; spiritual conference and discourse, Mal. iii. 16; meditation, Psal. lxxvii. 12; vowing and paying to the Lord, Psal. lxxvi. 11. Lastly, That the true worship of God, under the gospel, doth not consist in outward rites and ceremonies, but is spiritual, not only as to the matter but also as to the manner of it, flowing from grace in the heart, or an inward reverential esteem of, and trust in, that God whom we worship, John iv. 23, 24, and consequently, that the bringing in of the inventions of men into the worship of God, will be accounted by him will-worship and superstition, Matt. xv. 9. "In vain they do worship me, teaching the commandments of men."

3*dly*, There is the truth concerning the government and discipline of the house of Christ, a short account whereof,

from the Holy Scriptures, we shall lay before you; it having been that branch of truth which the Church of Scotland, ever since her reformation from popery, has mostly suffered for.

I do not pretend to advance anything new upon this subject, but only, in this reeling and shaking time, to endeavour the confirmation of your faith in these Scripture-truths concerning the government and discipline of the house of Christ, which have been largely handled by others before me; and this I shall essay in the following chain of propositions, without enlarging much upon them.

(1.) The Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, has all authority and power in heaven and in earth, for the government of his church, committed unto him from God the Father. Psal. ii. 6. says Jehovah, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion;" John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand;" "He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church," Eph. i. 22. And, in consequence of this eternal grant and donation of the mediatory kingdom from the Father, Christ the faithful witness testifies of himself, Matt. xxviii. 18. "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." So that the Lord Christ, as Mediator, is the only first receptacle of all power from the Father: John v. 22. "The Father—hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" and, consequently, he is the sole root and fountain of all ecclesiastical power and authority to his church: John xx. 21, 23. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you;" "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

(2.) The Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of the supreme power with which he is invested as the alone Head of the church, has committed the government of his church unto church-officers of his own institution, as the immediate receptacle of that ministerial power and authority by which he would have his church governed in this world.

This proposition contains in it the following particular truths.

That the Lord Christ has instituted and appointed officers in his church, for the edification of his spiritual kingdom, 1 Cor. xii. 28. compared with Eph. iv. 11.

These officers were either extraordinary, whose office was to cease with themselves; or ordinary, standing and perpetual.

The *extraordinary* officers were apostles, prophets, and evangelists, Eph. iv. 11. And that their office expired with themselves, is evident from the extraordinary qualifications with which they were endowed, which, in the nature of the thing, could not be transmitted by them to others; such as, immediate mission, universal commission, infallible inspiration, power of working miracles, and the like.

The *ordinary* standing officers appointed by the Lord Christ in the church, unto the end of the world, are pastors or teachers, Eph. iv. 11; ruling elders, 1 Tim. v. 17; and deacons, Acts vi. 3, 5, 6. The divine institution of these officers might be easily evinced from the texts just now mentioned, and several other texts of Scripture. Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28. Hence it follows,

That the office of a diocesan bishop, or any superiority in office whatsoever above a pastor or teaching presbyter, is contrary to the word of God, Matt. xx. 25—29. "Jesus —said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister:" 1 Pet. v. 3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage."

The preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments is peculiar to the office of the pastor, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Rom. x. 15. And this branch of the ministerial office every minister may exercise by himself, wherever he has a lawful call. But,

The power of governing the church, is derived from the Lord Jesus to the officers of his house (ministers and ruling elders) met in his name, as the only receptacle thereof under him: 2 Cor. x. 8. says the Apostle, "Though I should boast somewhat more of our authority which the Lord hath given us, for edification, and not for destruction, I should not be ashamed." Here you may see that the Apostle asserts an authority given unto him and other church-officers from the Lord, which he calls "*our* authority given unto *us*," including himself with other church-guides, which are plainly distinguished from the body of the church, whose edification was to be consulted in the exercise of that authority, and not their destruction; for, says he, "*our* authority is given for edification, and not for *your* destruction."

Besides, the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," or the exercise of ecclesiastical power, was given by our Lord to the apostles and their successors in ordinary office to the end of the world, Matt. xvi. 19. "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." What is here mentioned as given unto Peter, is also given to the rest of the apostles, Matt. xviii. 18. "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Opening and shutting are the proper acts of keys; and as the keys are the ordinances which Christ has instituted to be dispensed in the church, namely, the preaching of the word, and the administration of seals and censures; so, by the right use of these keys, the gates of the church here, and of heaven hereafter, are opened or shut to believers or unbelievers. And as the Lord has committed the exercise of these keys to church-officers only, (as is plain from the above texts,) it follows that church-officers are the only receptacle of ecclesiastical power under him.

From what I have said, concerning church-officers being the only receptacle of church-power from the glorious Head, two consequences unavoidably follow:

The first is, That the Lord Jesus has not committed any spiritual power, formally ecclesiastical, or any exercise thereof for the government of the church, to the civil

magistrate, heathen or Christian, as the receptacle thereof by virtue of his magisterial office; and therefore, however desirable the countenance of the civil magistrate may be, or his presence in the judicatories of a constitute church, yet it is evident from the word, that neither the presence of the supreme magistrate, or any commissioned by him, is essentially necessary to the validity of ecclesiastical decisions and determinations, which depends allenarly upon their being past in the name of Christ, agreeably to his laws published in his word, and declarative thereof, Matt. xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. v. 4.

Further, since the sole power of inflicting ecclesiastical censures is lodged in the office-bearers of the church by the glorious Head, it plainly follows that it is incompetent to the civil magistrate, and quite beyond the limits of his office, either to execute the censures of the church or to prescribe any rule how it should be done; and therefore we cannot but regret it, as a sinful and unwarrantable invasion upon the headship and sovereignty of Christ, that the civil powers, in the late Act of Parliament, have taken upon them, by their own authority allenarly, to declare such ministers incapable of sitting and voting in ecclesiastical judicatories, who should not read the said Act, according to the manner therein prescribed. And likewise, since a great many of the ministry have so sinfully complied with, and some way or other yielded obedience to, the authority of that Act, (as a crowning step of defection,) we would be unfaithful to our trust if we did not signify unto you that they ought to be testified against, as having recognised the civil magistrate for their head, and quit their holding of the Son of God, our Immanuel, on whose shoulders the government of the church is laid.

The other consequence is, that as the civil magistrate is not the first subject of spiritual power, so neither is this spiritual power, for the government of the church, delegated by the glorious Head to the multitude of believers, or the community of the faithful. They are nowhere in Scripture called church-rulers; and therefore they cannot

be the first subject of church-government: upon the contrary, they are called the flock, and church-officers the overseers set over them by the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28. Yea, the community of the faithful are so far from being the subject of church-government themselves, that they are expressly charged by the word of God to know, honour, obey, and submit to other governors set over them, and distinct from themselves, 1 Thess. v. 12. "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord;" 1 Tim. v. 17. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine;" Heb. xiii. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls." So that it is church-officers only, and neither the civil magistrate, nor the community of the faithful, that are the first subject or receptacle of church-government from the Lord Jesus Christ.

(3.) The key of discipline, or the power and authority derived from the Lord Jesus for the government of his church, is to be exercised, at his appointment, by church-officers, two or more met together in his name, in a judicative capacity, Matt. xviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The judicatories appointed by the Lord Christ, under the New Testament, are parochial sessions, presbyteries, and synods provincial or national.

The divine right of these judicatories, in general, may be evinced from Matt. xviii. 15—21; where our Lord makes a gradation, from the lowest number of church-officers warranted to assemble in his name, to the most numerous synod or council. Whence it is plain, that though one single person cannot, yet two or three, or any larger number of officers, may assemble for acts of government and discipline that may tend for the interest of that spiritual society whereof they are members. It follows also, that as two or three in one congregation may meet

together, so the officers of several congregations may assemble in a presbytery, for the interest of that larger body; and they have Christ's warrant in the above text, and the promise of his presence in so doing. Besides, there is in the word a pattern of presbyterial government over divers single congregations; as may be seen from the account we have in the New Testament of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth; in every one of which large cities there were more congregations of Christians than one, having their own proper officers, and all under the government of one presbytery, for a rule to the church in after-ages; as has been cleared from Scripture, by many eminent hands, particularly the famous Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in their answers to the objections of some Independent brethren against some of the propositions concerning church-government agreed upon by that Assembly, and approven by this church, as a part of the intended uniformity sworn to in the Solemn League and Covenant.

Moreover, since the edification of the whole visible church is the great end of church-government, the more generally and extensively Christ's ordinance of government is managed, the more complete provision is made for the edification of the whole body of Christ: and therefore the Lord Jesus, upon whose shoulders the government is laid, has left unto his officers a warrant to meet in a synodical or national assembly, in the pattern of that synodical meeting at Jerusalem, recorded Acts chap. xv., where you will see it evident that the constituent members of that synod, together with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, were delegates from other churches, particularly the church of Antioch, from which Paul and Barnabas, and certain others with them, were sent, by the public authority of that church, Acts xv. 2. And granting that commissioners from the churches of Syria and Cilicia were not at Jerusalem, (which yet I am apt to think they were, from the indorsement of the decree to them as well as Antioch, ver. 23;) yet, if but two presbyterial churches are warranted by

apostolical example to join in one synod, then by the same warrant the representatives of as many more presbyteries may assemble in one synodical meeting as are necessary for determining matters of a common concern to them all.

Further, that the members of this synod were only church-officers, will appear from this one consideration—that the question in debate in the church of Antioch was referred only to the decision of apostles and elders, Acts xv. 2, who were unquestionably church-officers: so it was the apostles and elders only that "came together for to consider of this matter," ver. 6. And whereas brethren are mentioned with the apostles and elders, ver. 23; yet these brethren cannot be the community of the faithful, in regard they could never be judges in this question, to whom it was not referred; for the question was referred to church-officers only, as I have already said: and therefore these brethren must be delegates or commissioners from the several churches, who were concerned to have the errors suppressed which were broached among them at that time, concerning the necessity of circumcision and the observance of the law of Moses in order to salvation.

I shall only add upon this head, that the decree passed by this synod was formally binding upon the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; as is plain from the tenor of the decree itself, Acts xv. 28. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Whence it follows that the presbyterial churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia were subordinate to the synod at Jerusalem; and, consequently, here is a pattern of the subordination of judicatories. Thus I have endeavoured to evince the divine right of the judicatories of the house of Christ. And, for your further confirmation in what I have here only very briefly hinted, I refer you to the Propositions concerning Church-government which you have bound along with your Confession of Faith, which I entreat you may read and consider, that you may be guarded, in this shaking time, against the

danger of Prelacy upon the one hand, and of Independency upon the other. But then,

(4.) The power and authority of ecclesiastical judicatories is not an absolute and magisterial, but only a stewardly and ministerial power, expressly limited to the observation of those things which the Lord Christ has commanded in his word, Matt. xxviii. 20. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Hence it follows, that when any ecclesiastical judicatory enacts any statute which is contrary to the word, or passes any decision which is not founded thereupon, that such statutes and decisions ought to be reputed by all the subjects of Zion's King as null and void in themselves, as wanting the stamp of his authority who is Zion's statute-maker; according to the marginal reading, Isa. xxxiii. 22.

Lastly, As the great end of church-government, next to the glory of God, is the edification of the church; so, when the discipline of the church is not faithfully and impartially exercised, but on the contrary the erroneous tolerated, intruders countenanced, and such as have in their practice given up with the headship and sovereignty of Christ, excused and vindicated; I say, when the discipline of the church is not exercised upon such offenders, (as is the case at present,) it is a just provocation to the Lord to leave the church. Thus we find the Lord passing a very severe censure upon the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, Rev. ii., for having the scandalous and erroneous among them; and their neglecting to purge them out, was no doubt one of the reasons why the Lord has removed his candlestick from among them to this day. These are a few of the Scripture-truths concerning the government and discipline of the house of Christ.

4thly, There is the truth concerning Christian practice, which includes the following particulars among a great many others: (1.) The inviolable obligation of the holy and righteous law of God, upon the regenerate as well as the unregenerate; but, in order to the yielding acceptable obedience to the law of God, it is absolutely necessary that

there be a vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ, John xv. 4, 5. Hence it follows that Gospel obedience ought to flow from a principle of faith, connecting the precept with the promise, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them." And from a principle of love to God, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (2.) That the law of God, or the revelation of his will, is the only standard by which our actions are to be tried, Isa. viii. 20. Hence it follows that the goodness of our actions is not to be judged by our extensive benevolence upon the one hand, nor by any selfish consideration upon the other. (3.) That our main purpose or ultimate end, in all our actions, ought not to be the advancement of our own self-interest, but the glorifying of God, or the manifesting of his glory: Rom. xiv. 7. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself;" 1 Pet. ii. 9. "Ye are a chosen generation——that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you ——." (4.) That the glorious excellencies and perfections of the divine nature are the main ground of our love and obedience, and not chiefly his benefits; as is plain from the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Hence it follows, that it is not our delighting in any virtuous or religious action that is the chief reason and motive thereof; but because God, the great Lawgiver, enjoins it, as tending to the manifestation of his own glorious excellencies and perfections. These are a few truths concerning Christian practice; and it is matter of regret that the supreme judicatory of this church have testified so little zeal for these precious truths, which so nearly concern the very life of sanctification, when they have assoilzied the impugner of them without the least censure. Thus I have endeavoured to give you some view of the "truth" which we are to "buy," and not to "sell." I proceed now to the

II. Head of the method, and that was, To inquire what it is to "buy" the truth, or, what is imported in the buying of it.

1. To "buy" the truth, is to have some knowledge and understanding of the truth. Men do not use to purchase that which they know nothing about,—some knowledge of a bargain is always necessary to the purchase of it: so here, "to buy the truth" supposes some knowledge of it, —that unto you it has been given in some measure "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;" that the Spirit has been taking the things of Christ and showing them unto you. In a word, that as you have been searching the Scriptures which testify of Christ, so he has been expounding to you from all the Scriptures "the things concerning himself;" Psal. cxix. 104. "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." Ignorance of the truth is the great reason why so few are in quest of it at this day; "Man knoweth not the price thereof," Job xxviii. 13.

2. To "buy the truth" imports an high value and esteem for the truth. Men do not purchase that which they undervalue and despise; some value for, and esteem of, a bargain is always supposed in the purchase of it: so to "buy the truth" imports a value for the truth, Psal. cxix. 72. "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of silver and gold." O what an high value doth a believing soul put upon the truth! such an high value, as to make no account of all things in a world in comparison of it, Phil. iii. 8. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Well, sirs, try by this if you are purchasers of the truth—what value are you putting upon Christ, who is "the truth?" Can you say as it is Psal. lxxvi. 4. "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey?" What value do you put upon the borne-down truths of Christ at this day? Can you say that the price of truth rises with you the more it is undervalued by a wicked world? Thus it was with the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 126—128. "They make void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold: therefore I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right." The mean-

ing is, the more contempt the wicked put upon truth, the higher value he had for it: the wicked were endeavouring to make the "law concerning all things to be void;" therefore, for this very reason, he esteemed the "law concerning all things to be right." For it must certainly be the truth which meets with opposition from the world.

3. To "buy the truth" is to appropriate the truth, or to make use of it as our own. Property necessarily follows upon a purchase: so here, to buy the truth is to have propriety in the truth; and so it is the same thing with believing the truth, for it is of the nature of faith to appropriate its own object, John vi. 4. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." Therefore we find that "being of the truth," or belonging to the truth, is inseparably joined with believing, or hearing of Christ's voice, John xviii. 37. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." O sirs, how wonderful is it that such a valuable thing as truth should be the property of sinners! Christ himself, and consequently all the good things contained in the promise of a God that cannot lie, is that truth which is the property of every one that believeth, 1 Cor. iii. at the close, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's." Try by this if you have made a purchase of the truth—Are you making use of Christ as your own, for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?" for so is he made over of God, unto you, in the Gospel, 1 Cor. i. 30. Do you know what it is to claim a right unto all the good things contained in the promise and word of truth, upon the right that Christ has to them, and as being "joint-heirs with Christ," who is the "heir of all things?"

4. To "buy the truth" imports a meditating or thinking much upon the truth. Men's thoughts commonly run upon their bargain or purchase that they have made: now, as there is not another bargain so valuable as divine truth, so nothing ought to engross our thoughts so much as it, Psal. cxix. 97. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Sirs, if you have made a purchase of the

truth, your meditation upon it will afford many sweet thoughts unto you: Psal. civ. 34. in metre—

> "Of him my meditation shall
> Sweet thoughts to me afford."

You will have sweet thoughts of God, when you think upon the glorious excellencies and perfections of his nature, as they are all eminently displayed, and harmoniously agree in the person of Christ, anent the salvation of the sinner. Particularly, you will have sweet thoughts of the love and mercy of God, when you think upon the costly channel of blood in which it runs unto you; you will have sweet thoughts of the justice of God, when you think upon the complete satisfaction that it has got by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God in your room; sweet thoughts of the truth and veracity of God, when you think upon the execution of the threatening on the person of the Surety. Again, you will have sweet thoughts of Christ, when you think upon his person, offices, relations to us, and the appearances he has made on our behalf; when you think upon what he has done, is doing, and will do; how that he became man, and a man of sorrows; that he hath magnified the law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; that he hath spoiled principalities and powers, confirmed the New Testament by his death, and ever liveth to see all the blessings or legacies thereof conferred upon the heirs of glory. So that, if you have made a purchase of the truth, your thoughts will run much upon that valuable bargain.

5. To "buy the truth" imports a rejoicing in the truth. Men use to rejoice in a good bargain, and to boast of it: so here, to "buy the truth" imports a rejoicing and a glorying in it, Psal. cxix. 111. "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart." Sirs, if you have bought the truth, you will rejoice in the word of truth as your charter for eternal life; you will rejoice in the truth of a promising God, as your security for the accomplishment of the promise. What-

ever ground of sorrowing you may find within yourselves, or abroad in the world, yet you will find ground of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as the all of your life, strength, righteousness, and salvation. And, if you are rejoicing and glorying only in his holy name, you will rejoice also "if you are partakers of his sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy," 1 Pet. iv. 13.

6. To "buy the truth" imports a maintaining of and contending for it. Men are very diligent and careful in maintaining and defending their properties: so here, to "buy the truth" imports a contending for the truth, Jude ver. 3. "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints."

This earnest contending includes in it the following particulars:

First, A weighty and important cause for which we are to contend, even the whole of that "faith once delivered to the saints," or the word of truth which is to be believed to salvation. And, that this word of truth is worth the contending for will appear, if you consider that the Author of it is the "faithful and true witness," Rev. iii. 14; the instruments, or penmen of it, infallibly guided by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. "The holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" the matter of it is everlasting truth, which shall stand firm when heaven and earth shall pass away; the form of it is in conformity to God himself—the power, purity, and truth of the word, is in conformity to the power, holiness, and faithfulness of God himself; the price of it is the blood of Christ; the benefits that redound to us by it are all those blessings we have forfeited by sin, and are now purchased and regained by the glorious Surety. So that it is a weighty cause we are to contend for.

Again, contending for the truth supposes that there are numerous and powerful adversaries to contend with, even all the swarms of soul-ruining seducers, animated and set on work by the god of this world; for "we wrestle not

with flesh and blood" only, "but with" flesh and blood assisted by "principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world," Eph. vi. 12. And these erroneous seducers cannot want cunning, to colour over their damnable heresies with smooth words and doubtful expressions, when they have the old serpent for their teacher; nor can they want malice, diligence, and activity, when they are instigated and driven on by the destroyer, who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

Further, this contending, in the purchasers of truth, supposes that they have strength whereby to resist these powerful adversaries. But now, their strength is not in themselves, but in their glorious Head, who, in virtue of their union with him, gives them continual supplies of grace for resisting temptations, and going through the difficulties and dangers that may be in their way, while among the lions' dens and mountains of the leopards; and, in a word, for enabling them to "do all things through Christ strengthening them," Phil. iv. 13.

Moreover, they that have bought the truth ought, in their contending for it, to put forth this borrowed strength against the enemy, in their several spheres and stations wherein they are placed in the world. Magistrates, by restraining heretics and seducers, as Hezekiah and Josiah did; ministers, by preaching the word of truth, by sound doctrine convincing gainsayers, and censuring the scandalous and erroneous, Titus i. 9, 11; Christians, of whatever station, by praying for the success of the word of truth, "that it may have free course and be glorified," 2 Thess. iii. 1; and by confessing the truth, and suffering for it when called thereto.

The way and manner in which the purchasers of the truth ought to essay to put forth their borrowed strength in contending for the faith is, (1.) Resolutely and courageously, with purpose of heart cleaving to the Lord, Acts xi. 23. (2.) Unanimously, "with one consent, and with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel," Phil. i. 27. (3.) Impartially and universally, for every

truth, and against every error. (4.) Constantly and steadfastly, holding "fast the profession of our faith without wavering," Heb. x. 23. (5.) Humbly and meekly, under a sense of our own inability to contend, and guarding against our own spirits, eyeing singly the glory of God, and depending upon his grace to be made sufficient for us, and his strength to be made perfect in our weakness. So much for the second thing proposed, What it is to "buy" the truth. I proceed now to the

III. Head of the method; and that was, To inquire who they are that "sell" the truth.

You may take their character in the following particulars; and, wherein it is applicable to any, may the Spirit of the Lord fasten saving conviction upon the soul.

1. They "sell" the truth who are "destitute of the truth," as the expression is 1 Tim. vi. 5. Such as are void of spiritual understanding, and never had their hearts moulded and fashioned according to the truth; whatever natural or acquired parts they may have, yet they never had the saving and solid knowledge of the truth; and therefore they cannot but part with it at a very cheap rate. Such are all those who have "not received the love of the truth, that they might be saved," 2 Thess. ii. 10. Though they be the hearers of the word, yet they are not the doers of it; and therefore, when tribulation attends the profession of the truth, "by and by they are offended."

2. They "sell" the truth who turn from the truth. The Apostle (to Titus, chap. i. 14.) discharges to "give heed to the commandments of men who turn from the truth." There are many who appear on the side of truth when there is no hazard in professing of it, who yet change sides when truth is universally run down. And, sirs, you will always observe that they who turn from the truth which they once professed, are the most bloody adversaries that ever truth or the defenders of it had. The bishops and their underlings, in the late persecuting times, at least for some years after the Restoration, what were they but apostate and perjured Presbyterians? and you all know

with what rage and cruelty they defiled the whole land with the blood of the Lord's witnesses, from which it is not yet purged. And there are many living amongst us at this day, who made some zealous appearances a few years ago, both in the pulpit and judicatories, for the covenanted principles of this church, against the current of defection at that time, who now discover a great deal of more warmth against those who are witnessing for the same cause which they themselves once seemed to espouse, and are turning the edge of their resentment with more keenness against them, than they who never made such a profession.

3. Erroneous persons "sell" the truth with a witness. There are many, of whom it may be said at this day as it was of Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 18., that "concerning the truth they have erred." The flood of error never swelled to such an height, in any period of this church since her reformation from Popery, as at this day; and never was there so little zeal shown for truth, when lying bleeding everywhere in our streets; the sad and dismal effects whereof are to be seen in every corner of the land:—many calling in question the great truths of God, and rejecting all the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, because they are not adapted, as they imagine, to their rational taste; many disputing themselves and others out of the truth; others mocking at truth and the professors of it; and the most part quite unconcerned to have the truth conveyed and brought home with power upon their own souls.

4. They "sell" the truth who resist the truth,—like those mentioned 2 Tim. iii. 8. Truth has an evidencing light going along with it, yet many repel the evidence. Although their consciences be convinced with silencing arguments on the side of truth, yet such is their enmity and prejudice at the truth that they give a deaf ear to all that is said in defence of it, or endeavour to shift the force of argument by mere evasion. Yea, some are so blindly wedded to a side, or give such implicit faith to their lead-

ers, that, though a Testimony be published for truth and against a current of defection, a sight of the title-page thereof sufficeth them. And I am apt to believe, that the open appearances of many against the truth of Reformation-principles at this day, is just in opposition to a few ministers and professors through the land, whom the Lord, in his adorable providence, has raised up to witness for the truth, and against the defections both of former and present times. But let not this surprise you, as if it were some strange thing; for you will always find that witness-bearing for the truth is "tormenting to them that dwell upon the earth," Rev. xi. 10. If there had been always a compliance with the world, there could never have been any persecution from it; for the "world will love its own:"—but the ground of all opposition and hatred from the world, is a non-compliance with, and testifying against, the principles, practices, and customs of it. Hence says our Lord of himself, in opposition to the time-servers of his day, John vii. 7. "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil."

5. They "sell" the truth who part with it for worldly gain; like Demas, of whom the Apostle says, 2 Tim. iv. 10. "He hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." There are many who will comply with the times rather than disoblige their superiors, or risk their worldly advantages; and how lamentable is it, that herein they should have the example of so many of the present ministry, who, by their late sinful compliance, have so shamefully sold the truth concerning the Headship of Christ, (which he witnessed for before Pontius Pilate,) for their worldly incomes! It is an heavy word which our Lord has concerning such, Matt. x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter," that is, the most valuable thing in a present world, "more than me, is not worthy of me." But, sirs, if there are any of you made willing by grace to lay down your worldly all at Christ's feet, in defence of his truth, there is an encouraging word to you,

Matt. xix. 29. "Every one who has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

6. As they "sell" the truth who part with it for worldly gain, so they "sell" the truth who make a profession of embracing it for worldly advantage, like those who followed Christ for the loaves. It has been observed by severals, that, at the Reformation from Popery, there were many zealous against the abbacies more out of love to their lands than hatred to their idolatry. But they who do not embrace the truth merely for itself, and because of its conformity to a God of truth, will easily part with it when the profits and preferments of the world are not upon its side.

7. They "sell" the truth who endeavour to conceal and smother the truth; like those who "deal deceitfully with the word," as it is in the marginal reading, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Now, they conceal the truth who cover former and present sins, and refuse to acknowledge them to the glory of God; as is the practice of ministers and judicatories at this day. They conceal the truth who do not give faithful warning of the hazard that truth may be in from the enemies and opposers of it. They conceal the truth who do all they can to keep the people in ignorance about the evils of the time; like treacherous watchmen, who see the enemy approaching, yet allow the city of God to be surprised without once giving notice of it. Again, they conceal the truth who palliate their own sinful practices by a partial acknowledgment of some part of truth; like many of late, who in words professed they owned the headship of Christ over his church, and yet in their practice renounced the same. But, sirs, they who are really upon truth's side, "have renounced these hidden things of dishonesty, and are not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Cor. iv. 2.

8. They "sell" the truth who distinguish away the truth. There are two distinctions which I would have you to be aware of;—there are some who distinguish between greater and smaller truths. I will not say that every truth is of equal importance to salvation; but sure I am that there is not a truth of God within the whole Bible that is of such small consequence to a believer, but that he would rather choose to give up with his life than part with it. Again, some distinguish between controverted and uncontroverted truths; alleging that we ought not to be tenacious about those things that have been controverted among learned men. But, were we to cast off all controverted truth, we should reject the whole Bible; for I know not that truth in it but has been controverted by some of the learned. And, if you would have it, the great reason why many use these distinctions, is just that they may throw the doctrine concerning the house of Christ among those lesser and controverted truths about which men may safely differ. But it has been observed, that they who have been easy about matters of government have been as indifferent about matters of doctrine when they have come into their cast; as is evident from the little zeal that has been shown for the great truths of God that have been controverted in our own day. Hence it follows,

9. They "sell" the truth who are not valiant for the truth; like those mentioned Jer. ix. 3. of whom it is said, that "they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth." There are many who are mere cowards in the cause of truth at this day: the enemy is bold and forward in opposing and bearing down the truth, and they shamefully and pitifully give it up without the least stroke of sword. The most part of those who were once thought well-affected to the cause of truth are now standing by as neutral and unconcerned spectators of the desolations of our Zion, or at least sighing and going backward. Where is there a standing testimony for truth among all the present judicatories at this day? Yea, there are standing sentences

and decisions against a plain and faithful testimony, whether doctrinal or judicial.

This partiality in the judicatories, in turning the edge of their sentences against those who are essaying to witness for the truth, and, upon the other hand, their omitting and refusing to give any suitable testimony themselves, even when opportunities were put in their hands for being valiant for the truth, has produced two fatal consequences which will not be so easily remedied.

First, This neutrality in the judicatories, about the truth both of the doctrine and government of the house of Christ, has given latitude to that uncontrolled freedom which is used with the great mysteries of godliness, by a numerous set of preachers in this church, by whose sermons one would scarce know that they are Christians; for you will seldom or never hear from them one word about the original corruption and depravation of man's nature, by his fall in the first Adam,—of his incapacity to recover himself,—nor of the necessity of a vital union with Christ, as the foundation of our justification and of all acceptable obedience:—these, and the like doctrines, so necessary to the salvation of sinners, are quite dropped by many of them; whereby they that hear them are left to "perish for lack of knowledge."

Another bad consequence that has followed upon the sinful neglect of a timeous testifying for the truth; and that is, that Deism, or a disregard to the Holy Scriptures, is now almost become universal, whether it be from a principle of malice, or from mere ignorance, or a fond desire to imitate one another. But so it is, that there are few of those who imagine themselves to be raised above the ordinary rank of men but who use intolerable freedom with the Holy Scriptures,—some by denying them in bulk, others by wresting them to their own destruction, and others by passing profane jests upon them; whereby they verify what the Apostle Peter says, second Epistle iii. 3. that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." Yea, to such an height of impiety

are we arrived at this day, that few or none are reckoned men of sense but such as can with freedom expose religion and the professors of it, however void they be of true and solid learning. I shall only say of them as the Apostle Jude has it, "They speak evil of the things which they know not." These are some of the sad consequences of omitting to be valiant for the truth; but let us all consider, that "whosoever shall be ashamed of Christ, and of his words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38.

I shall now essay to make improvement of what has been said in the following Inferences.

Inference 1. Are all commanded to "buy" the truth? then it follows that all are by nature destitute and void of it; a man needs not buy what is his own already, or what he has a right to by birth. Our buying of any thing says plainly that we have no previous property in it. We have lost and forfeited our possession of the truth in the first Adam, who "changed the truth of God into a lie," and left all his posterity to "inherit folly." All we have now by inheritance, or can call our own, is wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness, and nakedness, Rev. iii. 17; and, till we are convinced of this, it is impossible that we can have the least thought of "buying" the blessings which are suitable to us in these deplorable circumstances, though they be presented to us in this everlasting gospel.

Inf. 2. Are all commanded to "buy" the truth? then it follows that truth is now exposed to sale, and that all have free access to make the purchase. And herein shines the infinite love of God to mankind sinners, although we have justly forfeited all good, and deserve to have been miserable for ever, as well as the angels that fell, yet he hath "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son" to purchase and regain, with vast advantage, what we had irrecoverably lost in the first Adam. And the Son of God having actually made the purchase at the price of his blood, and in consequence thereof having full power and

authority to dispense and give out all purchased good among the children of men, hence doth he issue forth the proclamation to sinners of all sorts, to come and "buy of him gold tried in the fire that they may be rich, white raiment that they may be clothed, and eye-salve that they may see," Rev. iii. 18. Only you would notice, that, when we are called to come and buy these inestimable blessings at the hands of this great Proprietor, we have not anything like an equivalent price to offer, as in the case of contracts among men, where there is a just proportion between the price and the purchase; and therefore they are offered freely, and we invited to buy "without money and without price;" Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Inf. 3. Are we commanded at any rate to make a purchase of the truth? then it follows that it must be of inestimable value. Christ himself, and all the blessings of his purchase, grace and glory, and every good thing, is that truth which we are commanded to "buy;" and consequently the price of it is above "rubies, and all the" worldly "things that can be desired are not to be compared to it," Prov. viii. 11. Yea, it is of such a value that our very life depends upon the purchase of it, Prov. iv. 13. "Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life." If you lose what is contained in the word of truth, you lose infinitely more than your life is worth; for, "what will it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" If you get possession of this valuable treasure, it will bear your charges through all the hardships and difficulties of a present world; it will keep you alive and support you in the very jaws of death, and last with you through eternity. If you lose it, you are dead while you live; and, though you had the whole world in possession, you enjoy nothing but vanity, an empty shadow, while you have no interest in this "inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and

which fadeth not away." Besides, the word of truth is of such value, that there is no travelling heavenwards without it. It is that pillar of fire which is necessary to guide us through the dark night of a present world into the land of everlasting light and life. We have within us hearts that are "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,"—without us, innumerable snares and dangers; we have missed our way to eternal life in the first Adam, and, though we be in the high road to eternal ruin, yet such is our pride and ignorance that we cannot be persuaded of it; and therefore, if the word of truth is not a "lamp to our feet and a light to our path," we can never arrive at the rest that remains for the people of God.

Inf. 4. Is it the duty of all, at the command of God, to "buy" the truth, and for no price to part with it? then see the folly of the world, in putting such a low rate upon this inestimable treasure; like those who were invited to the marriage of the King's son, yet "made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise," Matt. xxii. 5.—preferring the things of a present world to the greatest offer that could possibly be made to them. There are some that put such a low value upon the truth, and are so far from buying it themselves, that they do what they can to hinder others from making the purchase; like those of whom our Lord speaks, Luke xi. 52. "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." They could not endure to see multitudes following Christ, and they used all methods to prevent it, although the poor people were starved then (as they are in many places amongst us at this day) with the dry and insipid doctrines of these times; and therefore no wonder that they travelled abroad, to buy food to their souls, when there was nothing but mere famine at home. There are others who undervalue truth to such a degree that they will not so much as frequent the market-place where it is to be sold—I mean, the ordinances of the gospel; the least outward inconvenience will keep them from attendance. But,

did they know the worth of what they are despising, they would dig for it as for hid treasures, and reckon nothing too dear for the necessary food of their perishing souls.

Inf. 5. Are we commanded to "buy" the truth? then the question is, Have you, upon the warrant and command of God, made a purchase of the truth? and are you so well satisfied with the bargain that you are resolved, through grace, never to part with it again? Now, in order to assist you in this inquiry, we shall put the following questions to your consciences, which we require you to consider, and to try yourselves by, as in the sight of God to whom we must make an account. Have you felt the power of the truth upon your own hearts, subduing sin in you, and making you loathe and abhor yourselves upon the account of it, as offensive to God, and framing your hearts and lives into a conformity to the image of God, and sweetly constraining you to all the duties of new obedience? Do you consult with the word of truth in all the pinching straits and difficulties that occur to you while in this valley of tears? When the world, or your own carnal reason, suggest this or the other danger attending the practice of duty, whether do you listen to their motions, or are you determined by the word as your only counsellor, with the psalmist, Psal. cxix. 24. "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors?" Have you been convinced that the word of truth is of such absolute necessity to you that there is no living without it? Psal. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living;" Psal. cxix. 92. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction." Although the times wherein we live be among the dear years of truth, when they that will buy it and keep it must be at greater expense than ordinary; yet, are you convinced that it must be had cost what it will? Are you satisfied that your credit and reputation sink in the defence of truth,—that you be reviled and reproached for Christ's name's sake,—that everything that is valuable

to you in the world be at the Lord's sovereign disposure,—and that you would rather part with your worldly all than with one hoof of divine truth? Are you walking in the truth? Second Epistle of John ver. 4. "I rejoiced greatly that I found thy children walking in truth." Are you walking in the light of truth, essaying to perform every duty, from such principles, in such a manner, with such a frame of heart, and aiming at such an end, as is required in the word of truth? Are you subject to the power and authority of the truth, content to be servants unto it, and to be wholly ruled and guided by it? Any of you that are engaged in the cause of truth, I ask you, upon what grounds and from what motives have you done it? Was it because you saw evidently a stamp of divine authority upon the truth, and felt the inward operation of the Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in your hearts, and therefore could not endure to see the truth trampled upon as mire in the streets without appearing as witnesses for it? Have you engaged in the cause of truth out of love to the person of Christ, who is "the truth?" and is this love to Christ the spring of all your appearances for him? Lastly, Are you abounding in the knowledge of the truth? If you are possessed of the truth, your desires will be more and more enlarged towards it,—you will never think that you have enough of it,—you will "follow on to know the Lord," Hos. vi. 3. Every new discovery of his glory will make you cry more ardently, with Moses, for a fresh discovery of it, "I beseech thee show me thy glory;" and at the same time you will be sensible of your own ignorance, and ready to say with Agur, Prov. xxx. 2. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." And in the same glass that you see the glory of the Lord will you see your own vileness, Isa. vi. 5. Now, by putting these or the like questions to your own consciences, you may come to know whether you have bought the truth or not.

The last use that I shall make of the doctrine shall be of Exhortation, in two branches, answerable to the words

of the text. (1.) Buy the truth. (2.) Beware of selling it, or parting with it again.

1st Branch of the Exhortation, answerable to the command of God, is, "Buy the truth." Sirs, this everlasting gospel is like a market, where all the necessaries and ornaments of life are exposed to sale; Christ, and all the blessings of his purchase, are set before you in the word, that you may buy them, and make use of them as your own. Only, for your better understanding of this, you must know that "buying" here is "believing." Faith is variously expressed in Scripture, according to the several views in which Christ the object of it is presented, and brought near, in the word of grace. When Christ is held out as a person of matchless comeliness and beauty, and as having that comeliness in him for the adorning of us who have "lien among the pots;" then faith is a "looking" to him, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." When Christ is exhibited as the "unspeakable gift" of God to mankind lost, then faith is a "receiving" of him, John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." And here, when Christ is presented as the "best bargain" for poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked creatures, faith is a "buying" of him;—only you must conceive of this buying in a suitableness to the bargain. The bargain is inestimable, infinitely above all value; and therefore this buying, on our part, must exclude all price; and so it agrees with the nature of faith, which is a taking and receiving grace. So then, the meaning of the exhortation, "Buy the truth," amounts just to this—'Since the best bargain that ever was is offered and presented unto you for nought, take it, and make use of it as your own, giving credit to all the testimony of God concerning it, without wavering or doubting.'

Now, to engage you to this, consider that God has made a free and gratuitous donation of his eternal Son, and all salvation with him, in the dispensation of the gospel, and requires sinners of all sorts to accept of the offer, without

doubting either of his ability or willingness to bestow all the good contained in the promise. This is clear from Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Where you see the person that makes the grant is JEHOVAH, who was justly offended by our sin, but now well-pleased for Christ's righteousness' sake. The grant itself is Christ and all things with him. The persons to whom the grant is made, are sinners of all sorts to whom the gospel comes. It is not unto men as they are elect, but unto men as such, that is, unto men as they are sinners, Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men." O then, be persuaded to take home this valuable treasure in the arms of your faith;—it will be life to the dead, light to the blind, liberty to the captive, bread to the hungry, righteousness to the guilty, strength to the weak, and all things to the empty sinner. Sirs, you are just now in the market-place, and there is here all imaginable variety of the most useful and costly wares, all of them absolutely necessary for you; and we can assure you, in the name of the God of truth, that you are heartily welcome to them all: "The Spirit saith, Come; and the Bride saith, Come; and whosoever will, let him come, and buy wine and milk without money and without price." Oh, sirs, will you go empty away, when the fulness of the Godhead is set before you? The promise is endorsed to you, and therefore you have a right to intermeddle with all the good that is contained in it; Oh, then, "be not faithless, but believing." The market-day will draw to a close ere it be long; it may be the last hour of it with many of us who have hitherto been standing in the market-place idle. You have now no time to lose,—shortly may those things be hid from your eyes,—and we have no warrant to allow you one moment to deliberate upon this matter. Here is the command of God to every one of you in particular, "Buy the truth;" therefore, instantly give obedience at your highest peril, especially when there is no room for deliberation in this case. Should

a starving man deliberate if he will take meat when it is set before him? Should a prisoner deliberate if he will go out of the prison-house when the doors are opened for him? Oh, then, without further delay, "buy the truth;" reach forth the hand of faith and take it, and the bargain is made. Our Lord Christ is not standing upon terms with you, he knows you have nothing; and therefore he is just now offering himself to you, and all that he is, and has, for nought, in this market of free grace. The way to be possessed of the rich commodities that are in it, is just to take them all, and then you have them. Let not the pride of your hearts deprive you of that which will make you up through eternity. Let not unbelief fill you with jealousies, as if these valuable goods were not ordained for such guilty creatures as you; for we can assure you from the word, that Christ "came to seek and to save" only "that which is lost; he came not to call the righteous but sinners unto repentance." Who is it that needs life but the dead? who need a righteousness but the guilty? who need eye-sight but the blind? and who stands in need of an indemnity but the condemned criminal? Therefore, since Christ is a Saviour ordained for men in these miserable circumstances, O come to him as you are, and "buy" of him, or, which is the same thing, "take" from him "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" for there is enough in him to satisfy the need of every thing that liveth. And, if you are thus determined to believe on the Son of God, you will see such a beauty and excellency in him, and in the whole of the truth concerning him, that you will account all things but loss in comparison of him, and the least point of divine truth worth a thousand worlds. And this leads me to the

2d Branch of the Exhortation, namely, that you beware of "selling" the truth, or parting with it.

This is a day wherein the truths of God go at a very low rate; many, who once professed to be Christ's disciples, are going back and walking no more with him. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the loving the

praise of men more than the praise of God, together with the outward dangers and disadvantages that attend a strict profession of the truth, are among the sad and dismal causes why so many part with it in this sinning and trying time. But we would have you all to consider, that, however low the price of truth may be at this day, yet there is a time coming when the worth of it shall be fully known. What would the greatest enemies and contemners of truth give to be possessed of that which they now so much despise, in the day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel?" What will this world and all the pleasures of it avail, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up?" The beauty and glory of truth shall then shine forth in perfection; and they who have bought it at the highest rate will then find, to their sweet experience, that they are the greatest gainers. O then, beware of parting with such a valuable treasure. And, in order to guard you against it, I shall lay before you the following

DIRECTIONS.—1. Endeavour to get the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." And, for this end, be much employed in searching the Scriptures, and examining what you read or hear with that unerring standard, as the Bereans did. Look to the great "Apostle and high-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus," that he may teach you to profit; for he has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," and is commissioned of the Father "to open the eyes of the blind," and is fully qualified for this work, for all "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him." Essay to fasten upon the promise of God for the saving knowledge of the truth, Jer. xxxi. 34. "They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."

2. Seek to be established in the truth, and particularly in the "present truth," as the expression is 2 Pet. i. 12;

that is, in the truths that are presently opposed and controverted; and you have the more need to seek to be established in the truth, in regard of the cunning and subtilty of seducers, who "with feigned words make merchandise of souls," 2 Pet. ii. 3; or as it is Rom. xvi. 18. "By good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," —that is, such as mean well but want wisdom to discern the cunning of those who mean ill, and therefore are easily imposed upon by the "fair speeches of those who lie in wait to deceive." Now, in order to your being established in the present truth, see that you be well grounded in the principles which you profess, that you may not be beguiled as unstable souls, or be at the mercy of every wind of doctrine. Again, it will be very establishing in the truth to get a view of it as having a stamp of divine authority upon it,—to see it with a "Thus saith the Lord" upon the front of it. Further, endeavour to keep your eye upon him who is "the truth." You will deviate and turn aside that moment you lose sight of him; therefore be much in prayer, seeking to be stablished, strengthened, and settled by the Lord himself. Lastly, Rest not till you feel the efficacy of every truth you profess upon your own hearts.

3. See that you maintain a steadfast profession of the truth, Heb. x. 23. "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering." This is a wavering and shaking time wherein we live, and they who once begin to stagger are at the next door to apostasy. But to engage you to make a steadfast profession of your faith, consider that truth is that great trust which God has committed unto us, with a strict and solemn charge to keep it against all that would undermine or oppose it; for which reason it is called the "faith once delivered unto the saints." Since, therefore, this is such a valuable trust which is committed unto us, we ought to be faithful to our trust, in maintaining a steadfast profession of the truth in this reeling time. And in order to this, "receive the love of the truth." Love to the truth will make you bear witness to it at all hazards, though it should be at the expense of your name, reputa-

tion, worldly interest, or even of your life itself. Labour also to get your hearts inflamed with love to God himself, who is the God of truth. David's love to Jonathan made him inquire for some of his race, to whom he might show kindness for Jonathan's sake; so love to God will make the soul inquisitive to know what is near and dear to God, that, by showing kindness to it, he may express his love to him: and nothing is dearer to him than his truth, for it is one of the greatest mercies that can be bestowed upon a people, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation." And dreadful are the punishments he inflicts upon the enemies of his truth, even all the plagues that are written in the word of truth, Rev. xxii. 18.

I shall conclude with a few properties of the truth, which may be considered as motives to engage you to a steadfast profession it. (1.) Truth is "pure," Psal. xix. 7;—not only pure in itself, but also maketh the soul pure and holy that embraceth it. (2.) Truth is a sure and lasting possession; it "endureth for ever," Psal. xix. 7:—it has a firm bottom, able to bear your weight. Sirs, cleave to the truth, and it will abide with you, and go with you to prison, banishment, yea, to death itself, and bear your charges wherever you go upon its errand. (3.) Truth is "free," John viii. 32. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." When once Christ and the soul are brought together by the word of truth, then the day of your redemption is come, a deliverance from your spiritual bondage is accomplished. (4.) Truth is "victorious,"—the counsel of the Lord shall stand. The age of truth runs parallel with God's eternity,—it shall live to see their heads laid in the dust who were so busy in seeking to bury it,—yea, it shall reign in peace with the sufferers for it, when the unrelenting oppressors thereof shall gnash their teeth with never-ending pain for their opposition unto it. Witnesses for truth may sometimes be few, but there shall always be some; and therefore, though persecutors may sometimes

be permitted to get the present set of witnesses off the stage, yet instantly will others start up in their room, whom they did not think of before; for "his name shall endure for ever," and consequently there shall be a "seed to serve him," who will make his "name to be remembered in all generations."

SERMON II.*

THE MATTER OF GOSPEL PREACHING— CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.

2 Cor. iv. 5.—"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

In this epistle the Apostle vindicates himself from the calumnies and aspersions of the false teachers of those times, not only in asserting the validity of his mission to the holy ministry, which some of them seemed to question, but also in affirming that he discharged his pastoral office from a sincere regard to the real edification of lost sinners, and not from any selfish view or carnal bias whatever, as you may see in the words of our reading: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," &c.

In which words you may notice, 1*st*, The duty of gospel ministers,—it is to "preach" ("We preach"). The word signifies, to proclaim or publish a thing with a loud and audible voice, that all may hear,—in allusion to criers or heralds who publish the edicts of magistrates. Ministers indeed are, by their office, criers or heralds, not to proclaim the edicts and commands of earthly princes, but to "lift up their voice like a trumpet," in declaring "the whole counsel of God." 2*dly*. You have the subject, or the matter of gospel-preaching, expressed negatively,—it is "not ourselves, but" it is, or ought to be, "Christ Jesus the Lord." Under these names, here given to the glorious Redeemer, is comprehended the whole matter of gospel-

* Preached at the ordination of the Rev. James Mair at West Linton, May 29, 1740.

preaching. Christ signifies "Anointed," and under this name are included all the doctrines relating to his eternal designation and appointment to the office of Mediator, and the unmeasurable communication of the Spirit to him, for the discharge of his mediatory offices. Jesus signifies a "Saviour," and under this name are contained all the doctrines relating to his wonderful incarnation, his exemplary life, and meritorious death; or all the truths that are comprehended under the impetration or purchase of our redemption, the honour of all the divine attributes manifested thereby, together with the circumstances of the persons whom he came to save. Again, the same glorious person is to be preached as he is "the Lord,"—which takes in all the doctrines pertaining to his exaltation, his supreme headship over his church, and the powerful application of the redemption purchased by him; so that if we knew what it were to preach "Christ Jesus the Lord," we would find that under these three comprehensive words are contained all the truths that we are commanded in Scripture to believe concerning God, and all the duties which God requires of man. 3*dly*. You have the laborious office of the ministry described, in these words, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Ministers are "servants," which imports faithfulness and diligent labour,—they are employed in serving sinners of Adam's family; says the Apostle here, we are "your servants,"—to serve you with all the blessings of the new covenant, to spend and be spent in your service. The names in Scripture given to ministers, such as pastors, stewards, watchmen, labourers, all import a service, excluding anything like domination, or "lording it over God's heritage,"—but including humility, industry, fidelity, love, and helpfulness. Christ only hath domination and pre-eminence, all his office-bearers are but servants or ministers; like the priests and Levites, they are to "serve the Lord and his people" Israel, 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. But then, they are servants for "Jesus' sake,"—which imports the great love that Christ has to lost sinners, and that this love is shed abroad in the hearts of his faithful

servants, who, upon that account, beseech sinners, in "Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God."

Having thus explained the words, I shall essay, as the Lord shall assist, to discourse upon them suitably to the occasion of our meeting, in the following order. I shall speak, 1*st*. Of the Matter of gospel-preaching, as it is here expressed in our text, both negatively and positively. 2*dly*. Of the Manner in which Christ Jesus the Lord is to be preached. 3*dly*. Of the Office of Gospel-ministers, as they are servants, first of Christ, and then of sinners, for Jesus' sake. And then, Deduce some Inferences for the Application.

I. I am to essay to offer some thoughts upon the Matter of gospel-preaching, as it is here expressed in our text, both negatively and positively;—it is not to be "ourselves," but "Christ Jesus the Lord." And upon this Head I shall,

First, Speak of what is *not* to be the matter of our preaching,—"We are *not* to preach *ourselves*."

Self is the great rival that the Lord Jesus has in the hearts of the children of men; it not only prefers sinful pleasures, and the lawful comforts of life, unto him, but wants to share with him in our most solemn duties and religious exercises. There is no need for crying up this idol of self, and exalting it above the authority of God in his word, as is done at this day; for I make no doubt to affirm, that self-love is the leading principle of action to all men in a natural state. It was self-love that made Pharaoh oppress Israel, lest they should become too many and strong for him;—it was self-interest that made Jeroboam set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, lest unity of worship should reduce the ten tribes to the house of David again;—it was nothing but self-love that made Demetrius and the craftsmen cry up Diana, and cry down the gospel of Christ, Acts xix. 24, 27:—so that self is the chief end of every natural man; therefore, that which constitutes the difference between a natural and a renewed man is this—self is the end of the one, Christ is the end of the other. The natural man studies nothing more than to

gratify his self-love,—that is, love to himself is that which moves him on to all the actions of life, whether natural or moral; his happiness is only in himself, and therefore he must live to himself, and can have no higher end than to gratify self one way or other. But the desire of the new creature is to be denied to self, to be denied to sinful self absolutely, without any reserve or exception; to have the ocean of corruption, and all the streams that flow from it, quite dried up in the soul, crying with the Apostle, Rom. vii. 24. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The believer desires also to be denied to natural self conditionally, or upon supposition of a call in adorable Providence; that is, he desires, through grace, to part with outward ease, reputation, houses, lands, wife, children, yea, life itself, or whatever is dear to him in this world, when it stands in opposition to, or in competition with, the glory of the Redeemer and the interest of his kingdom. Thus the Apostle Paul, Acts xxi. 13. "I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die" at Jerusalem "for the name of the Lord Jesus." And then, as to religious self, the believer desires to be denied to all his duties and graces, in point of righteousness or justification before God, and to rely upon the righteousness of the Lord Christ alone, as the sole ground of his pardon and acceptance in the sight of God. In a word, as the believer's happiness lies without himself, so he desires to aim at the glory of God and of the Redeemer as his greatest and chief end; agreeable to this is the exhortation of the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;" and, in order to this, we find that it was one great end of the death of Christ to take sinners off from self,—to rest only on a God in Christ as the all of their happiness and salvation, 2 Cor. v. 15. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." As Adam's sin hath set up self in opposition to the authority of God, so the death of Christ hath put down self, and advanced God in the soul to his

right of being our chief end. Since, then, self is such a beloved idol that men naturally want to exalt it above all that is called God, to the ruin of their own souls, we ought all of us carefully to beware of it, especially we that are ministers, in delivering God's message to lost sinners, anent their eternal salvation. The Apostle here disclaims it in his own practice—"We preach not ourselves," says he; and so ought every minister of the gospel, through grace, to endeavour to guard against self in the discharge of his pastoral office.

In speaking therefore to what the Apostle here disclaims, as the matter of his preaching, when he says, "We preach not ourselves," it will be native to inquire, When ministers may be said to preach themselves?

1. When they run unsent, and obtrude themselves upon the Lord's heritage, not only without their consent, but when they are actually testifying and reclaiming against it; and in this case, when people are willing to call a gospel-minister to feed their souls, they who intrude upon them can be said to act from no better principle than self-interest; the fleece, and not the flock, must certainly be in their eye; and therefore they practically declare that their preaching is not for the edification of souls, but only a mean in law to obtain a livelihood;—of all such the Lord says, Jer. xxiii. 21, 32. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied: therefore they shall not profit this people at all." But then, although intruders, who previous to, or without regard to any call, accept of a presentation to a benefice, do openly proclaim to the whole world that they make a trade of preaching only for a livelihood; yet it is possible that others, who have a fair enough outward call to the ministry, may have gain also chiefly in their view, therefore they will be looked upon, in the sight of God, to "preach themselves," (whatever their call or character, in the sight of the world, may otherwise be,) who preach for filthy lucre's sake, or for their own private interest, like the scribes and Pharisees, who, "for a pretence, made long

prayers, that they might devour widows' houses," making gain of an outward show of godliness. Of all such it may be said, as of the priests and prophets of Jerusalem, Micah iii. 11. "The priests thereof teach for hire, the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? No evil shall come upon us." Now, as one self-seeker had very nigh brought ruin upon the whole camp of Israel; so, when there are a multitude of self-seekers in a church, you may see what desolation they bring upon it, ver. 12. "Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

2. Ministers "preach themselves," when they study the applause of the people more than their souls' edification; such are all those, who, either in composing or delivering their sermons, have no higher aim than how to please their audience, so as to get a name to themselves that they preach well. This was far from the practice of the apostles of our Lord, recorded in Scripture for the imitation of their successors in ordinary office, 1 Thess. ii. 4. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts."

3. They preach "themselves" who vent the "deceits of their own heart," as the expression is Jer. xxiii. 26; that is, who industriously endeavour to deceive people into a liking of, and compliance with, the inventions of their own heart, however inconsistent with the pure word of God; whereby the hearts of the righteous are made sad, and the hands of the wicked strengthened. Such are all those who support absolute Church authority, by vindicating from the pulpit or otherwise the several Acts and Decisions which have been of late years passed by the present judicatories, like the statutes of Omri,—so manifestly in opposition to the laws and commandments of Zion's King, published in his word. Such are those also who defend the ceremonies of human invention introduced into the wor-

ship of God; and those likewise who cry up union with a church as an essential branch of the Christian character, although they cannot pretend to enforce that union from the Scripture marks of the church of the living God, particularly that it is "the pillar and ground of truth," 1 Tim. iii. 15. Of all such it may be said, "In vain do you worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Under this head may be included, as preaching "themselves," or the "deceits of their own heart," who, in their sermons, inveigh severely against the injuries they look upon as done to themselves, but can pass with little or no notice the public injuries done to the cause and interest of Christ. Such are all those who reflect upon the people for leaving their ministry, (notwithstanding of the just grounds they may have for so doing,) as one of the greatest grievances of the times,—although it is plain that withdrawing is the only open testimony that the people can give against backsliders who refuse to be reclaimed; and you will observe that there are many of them, at this day, of the same spirit with Pashur the false prophet, who smote Jeremiah, and "put him in the stocks," chap. xx. 2. because he declared the whole counsel of God, and could not fall in with, but testified against, the measures of the false prophets of those times.

4. They preach "themselves" who study fine language and oratory in their sermons more than substantial matter,—whose chief concern is about the propriety of the style, without being solicitous whether they are understood by the bulk of their hearers or not, providing only they please a few whom they look upon to be men of taste; and it is to be lamented, that, for ordinary, in such sermons, the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, upon which the faith of poor sinners is terminated only for salvation, are industriously kept out. This is preaching with the "enticing words of man's wisdom," quite contrary to the practice of the apostles of our Lord, set down for the imitation of all gospel-ministers, who did not "speak the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought;

but the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory," 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

5. Ministers preach "themselves" when they handle the word of God deceitfully, and give an uncertain sound,—when they do not give faithful warning against the sins, and for the duties of the times; but study to please men with flattering words, and make their sermons tools for advancing their own political ends, either in pleasing the people or the leading party, as it makes most for their worldly interest.

In a word, they "preach themselves" who, either in studying or delivering their sermons, have not the glory of God and the salvation of sinners at heart,—and who do not endeavour in a way of looking to the Lord, and, as in his sight, to search out that matter from the Holy Scriptures, which they judge will be most suitable for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints. Thus I have showed, in some particulars, what is *not* to be the matter of our preaching; we are not to preach *ourselves* in any of the above or like instances.

I proceed now to speak of the positive matter of gospel-preaching,—what it is that we are to preach, or what ought to be the sum and substance of all our sermons; the text says, it is "Christ Jesus the Lord." This is a comprehensive subject indeed,—a subject that will furnish abundance of matter for all our sermons while the world stands, and for all the praises of the redeemed company from among men through the ages of eternity. It is therefore but a very few hints that we can give of this inexhaustible matter of gospel-preaching, "Christ Jesus the Lord."

In general, "Christ Jesus the Lord" is the sum and substance of the whole Bible, John v. 39. "Search the Scriptures," says he, "for they are they which testify of me." He is the object of our faith and the foundation of all Christian practice; by him do we believe in God, and without him we can do nothing. So that, to preach "Christ Jesus the Lord," is to preach him as the sum of all the

promises, the fulfilment of all the types, and the accomplishment of all the prophecies in the Bible concerning the Messiah. It is to make him the matter and substance of our preaching. "I determined," says the Apostle, "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. All the materials of gospel-preaching have a manifest relation to Christ. Are we to preach the duties of religion, or the doctrines relating to Christian practice? then we ought, at the same time, to show that all the duties which God requires of man are to be done in the strength of Christ—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13. We should teach that it is the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts that constraineth us unto all acceptable obedience—"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John xiv. 21. When the duties of religion are enforced and urged, it ought to be done in a connection with the promise. There cannot be a more forcible motive to obedience than to know and believe that a gracious God has required nothing of us in point of duty but what he has promised furniture and strength for the performance; or, in other words, that the same duties required of us in one place of the Bible, are to be found promised as blessings in another, for it is "God that worketh in us both to will and to do;" hence he says, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Are we to preach the mysteries of the gospel? then we cannot do this but with a relation to Christ, for all the mysteries to be believed have Christ wrapped up in them—"These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," John xx. 31. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel, or the doctrines which are purely supernatural, and distinguish the gospel from the law of nature, cannot be preached but with a respect unto Christ, as is evident from the comprehensive summary of them recorded 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,

seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Are we to preach the promises of the gospel? then we ought, at the same time, to show that all of them have their foundation and stability in Christ; "for all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. Are we to publish the threatenings of the law, or "the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men?" then we ought, at the same time, to lead sinners to Christ, who is the only sanctuary and refuge from sin and wrath; so that all the doctrines of faith are to be preached with a relation to Christ. Again, are we to encourage sinners to frequent a throne of grace, and to tell them what they are to seek from a gracious God, who "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not?" then we are, at the same time, to assure them, that whatever promised blessing they shall ask in Christ's name, it shall be given unto them, John xvi. 23. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Are we to preach the nature, ends, and uses of the sacraments of the New Testament? then we cannot do this without showing that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are instituted memorials of him who was sacrificed for us. So that, "to preach Christ" is to make him the argument, matter, or subject of our preaching; or to declare the whole counsel of God, concerning the salvation of lost sinners, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But, more particularly,

We are to preach, that there was love in the heart of God from eternity, towards a company of Adam's family, when he foresaw, that, with the rest of mankind, they would plunge themselves into a state of sin and misery, and that they would be irrecoverably lost, for anything they could do for their own relief, Jer. xxxi. 3. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" 1 John iv. 10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

That this amazing love, which is essential to God, might be vented to mankind-sinners, in a consistency with the

honour of the other glorious attributes of the divine nature, the Lord Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity, God every way equal with the Father and Holy Ghost, engaged from eternity to be Mediator, to assume our nature into personal union with himself, to obey the law and suffer in our room, and to do and be everything that was necessary for bringing "many sons and daughters unto glory," Psal. xl. 7. "Then said I, Lo, I come."

We are to preach, that, in consequence of this transaction, no sooner had man sinned than presently the eternal purpose and scheme of salvation was discovered and revealed, in the promise of the seed of the woman to bruise the head of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. The mercy and love which was eternally in the bosom of God, did flow out in a plenteous stream, upon miserable Adam and his posterity, in the first promise; for, while Justice is pronouncing an irreversible sentence of damnation upon the fallen angels, Mercy breaks immediately forth in the promise of an incarnate Deity for the redemption of fallen man, and that before one word of threatening was denounced against him,—as is evident from Gen. iii.; that so the sinner might not be discouraged from closing with the promises in a way of believing, whatever otherwise was the demerit of sin, upon the breach of the first covenant.

Again, to "preach Christ" is to declare the spring and origin of our sin and misery,—which is the fall of our first parents from that state of happiness and glory in which they were created,—whereby all mankind "have sinned and come short of the glory of God," in regard the covenant of works was made with and broken by the first Adam, as the federal head and representative of all his posterity, Rom. v. 12. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Further, we are to teach from the word, that God has not left all mankind to perish in a state of sin and misery, into which they voluntarily plunged themselves, but, out of his mere good pleasure, has chosen some to everlasting

life, whom he brings into a state of salvation by a covenant of grace. We are to show that this covenant was made with Christ, as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed: Psal. lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my chosen." That all the good things necessary to eternal life, or necessary to the being of a believer, are freely and absolutely promised; such as the new heart, pardon of sin, perseverance, and the like:—"A new heart will I give unto you; I will forgive their iniquities; I will cause them to walk in my statutes; and"—which comprehends all—"I will be their God, they shall be my people." And consequently we are to show that faith, which is the gift of God, is only the instrumental means of receiving and appropriating Christ and the benefits of his purchase, but is no part of our justifying righteousness. It is only the hand that receives that righteousness whereby we are justified,—even the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus, which is graciously imputed to us, and received by faith alone, as our Catechism expresses it according to the Scripture. So that we are to show that the help of perishing sinners is laid on Christ, as the only ordinance of God for their salvation; for "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12; and that the Old as well as New Testament saints were saved by faith in his blood.

Again, to "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," is to set him forth as "God" made "manifest in the flesh;" that he actually assumed our nature into personal union with himself, in virtue whereof the human nature subsists in the second person of the Trinity, without the least composition or confusion, both natures making but one person, in regard the human nature never had any personal subsistence of its own, but, from the first moment of its miraculous formation by the Holy Ghost, it subsisted in union with the second person of the Godhead; and therefore, though each nature retain its own essential properties, yet whatever Christ did and suffered, or continueth to do as Mediator, is not to be considered as the act of this or that

nature only, but as the act and work of the whole person of him who is both God and man; or, which is the same thing, whatever he doth, as prophet, priest, and king of his church, he performs it on account of the union of both natures in him as Mediator.

Moreover, we are to preach that the Lord Jesus assumed the human nature into personal union with the divine, that he might be capable of performing the whole office of a Mediator between God and man. That since God graciously purposed to show mercy to mankind-sinners, a complete satisfaction in our nature and in our room, was absolutely necessary for the vindication of the truth and veracity of God, interposed in the threatening of the law, and for the satisfaction of vindictive justice, which is essential to God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot but punish sin wherever he finds it, either in the person of the sinner or in the cautioner; and, consequently, though the law was relaxed as to the person suffering, inasmuch as God graciously accepted of a surety, yet neither the law nor justice of God could dispense with the penalty which was denounced against the transgressor, and therefore Christ suffered the same thing that was threatened to transgressors. It was not something else, which God accepted in lieu of the penalty of the law, that Christ suffered, but the very penalty itself that was threatened therein,—as appears from the translation of punishment from the sinner to the surety, so often spoken of in Scripture. Rom. viii. 3. "God condemned sin in the flesh," that is, in the human nature of Christ as assumed into the divine; and ver. 32. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." 2 Cor. v. 21. "He hath made him to be sin for us;" that is, our sins were imputed to him, on account of which he was made an offering or a sacrifice; so that the whole punishment contained in the curse or sanction of the law was undergone by Christ, who was "made a curse for us." And if it is said that Christ did not undergo eternal death, which is contained in the threatening, it must be remembered that it is not essential

to the punishment of the law that it be eternal,—the eternity of punishment arises only from the infirmity of the creature, who is not able at once to bear the whole punishment of sin; but Christ, who is God-Man, was able to bear the whole load of divine wrath at once, and therefore the extremity of the sufferings of such a glorious person was in full compensation of that eternal death which we should have undergone. I have insisted the more largely on this head, because of the damnable error vented by many in our day, as well as by the Socinians of old, namely, that Christ is only an exemplary Saviour, and that his main errand into the world was only to give us an example of holiness and virtue, as they call it; whereas there is nothing more plainly revealed in Scripture, than that the Lord Jesus was made accountable and liable to justice for the iniquities of an elect world, as if they had been his own; that, in their room or stead, he actually obeyed the law which they brake in Adam, and suffered the whole punishment which was due to their transgression.

We "preach Christ Jesus the Lord" when we show, for the comfort of Adam's family, that "he has finished the work which his Father gave him to do:" John xix. 30. "He said, It is finished:"—and that his obedience unto the death, because of the dignity of his person, being of infinite value, must be a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God, and fully satisfactory to offended justice, as is evident from his resurrection from the dead, his sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the downpouring of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his word on the hearers of the gospel.

Again, to "preach Christ," is to declare that, in consequence of his finishing the great work of redemption, he is "now made manifest, and, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," Rom. xvi. 26. So that there is nothing now, either in law or justice, to hinder the greatest sinner from receiving the "unspeakable gift" of God; yea, on the contrary, all that hear this gospel are called, commanded,

and beseeched to be reconciled unto God. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him:" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:" "The Spirit saith, Come." But, at the same time, we must show that the heart must be powerfully opened to receive Christ as he is offered in the gospel: John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." We should tell sinners that they must be God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,"—convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, by the Spirit, "who taketh of the things of Christ and showeth them unto us;" and that, when he comes into the heart, he brings all grace along with him, and carries on the work of sanctification there, till at death there be not left in the soul any spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

To "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," is to set him forth in all his offices unto which he is anointed and consecrated from eternity. That he is the great Prophet or "Teacher come from God,"—an "Interpreter, one among a thousand," who has the tongue of the learned, and speaketh as never man spake. That he is the "high priest of our profession," who has offered up that wonderful and acceptable sacrifice of "himself," whereby we have remission of sin, access to the presence of God, and all the blessings of the new covenant; and in virtue whereof it is that he maketh continual intercession for us. That he is invested with the office of a King, both for subduing, ruling, and defending his own people, and also for restraining and conquering all his and their enemies: Rev. xix. 16. "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." He is given to be Head over all things to his church, to whom he is the only King, Judge, and Lawgiver; and therefore, when Christ is preached as a King, his headship and sovereignty in and over his church, as his free and independent kingdom, ought to be plainly asserted, in opposition to all the invasions that have been or are made upon it by civil or ecclesiastical

powers. The government of his house ought to be vindicated, and ministers should not give an uncertain sound, but tell people, that, according to the Scriptures, the government of the church, in a due subordination of judicatories, such as kirk-sessions, presbyteries, and synods provincial and national, consisting of officers duly called to their office, is the only government in the New Testament whereby the Lord Christ would have his church governed to the end of the world.

Again, to "preach Christ" is to proclaim all the relations wherein he stands to mankind-sinners; that he is a suitable Saviour,—who saves not only from the curse of the law, from the tyranny of Satan, and from wrath, but also from sin as the greatest of all evils; his name is Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins." We are to preach him as a most sympathizing, familiar, and constant friend,—as a skilful and successful physician,—as an affectionate and everlasting husband, "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever,"—and as a wise, powerful, and unerring guide, who leadeth his people in the way wherein they should go.

Further, to "preach Christ" is to set him forth in all the appearances that he has made on our behalf;—in his wonderful birth, his exemplary life, his meritorious death, his triumphant resurrection and ascension, and his awful and majestic appearance at the last day;—for "every eye shall see him, when he cometh in flaming fire against his enemies, but to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 8, 10.

In a word, to "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," is to preach him as "made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." To preach him as our all,—the all of our life, righteousness, and strength,—the all of our furniture for work or warfare,—the all of our stock:—for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands;" "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and we are "complete in him."

I may add, that to "preach Christ" is to "testify" against all the errors, tenets, or opinions that are vented against the doctrine, worship, discipline and government instituted by him in his word; and to this we are bound under a very awful certification: Luke ix. 26. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." Thus I have hinted at some few things only that are contained in this inexhaustible matter of gospel-preaching, "Christ Jesus the Lord." I proceed to the

II. Head of the Method, which was to speak of the Manner in which Christ Jesus the Lord, or the doctrines relating to faith and practice, are to be preached.

1. We are to "preach Christ" *plainly*, so as to be understood by our hearers, though they should be unlearned and of weak capacities. We ought not, when dealing with sinners in Christ's stead, to use the "enticing words of men's wisdom," or make an ostentation of wit and human eloquence, which may gratify the ears of some, and be quite unintelligible to others; but we should essay to preach Christ "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," 1 Cor. ii. 4; that is, we are to demonstrate, from the word, man's lost state by nature, the way of his recovery and redemption by Jesus Christ, and the indisputable right and title that he has to the whole of this salvation, brought near in the promise to mankind-sinners as such;—and this kind of demonstration will be powerful, through God, to persuade sinners to embrace Christ, as he is offered in the gospel. It is not by rational arguments, but by a "manifestation of the truth," as it lies in the word of God, that we will "commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Cor. iv. 2. It is by a plain gospel-sermon that the secrets of men's hearts are made manifest, and that they are so convinced as to acknowledge that God is in such a preaching of a truth, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

2. We should "preach Christ Jesus the Lord" with *spi-*

ritual wisdom,—seasonably distributing milk to babes, and stronger meat to those who are of a more advanced age, or who are privileged with a larger measure of grace. Herein lies the wisdom of the steward of God's household, when he gives them their portion of meat in due season, applying the Scriptures to the various circumstances of the hearers.

3. We are to "preach Christ" *faithfully*, not "daubing with untempered mortar," nor dissembling or corrupting the word of truth, but delivering the whole counsel of God, and speaking his words, whether men will hear or forbear, Ezek. ii. 7.

4. With *spiritual authority*,—as "ambassadors for Christ," delivering his message in his name, charging sinners to believe in Jesus, to turn from sin to God, and to hearken to his voice, as they are to be answerable to him who will call for an account of every word that they hear.

5. We are to "preach Christ" with the *spirit of meekness*, as being taught of him who is "meek and lowly in heart;" considering, in the first place, our own insufficiency for these things, and the need that we have to take ourselves the same instructions that we give from the word unto others, and this will engage us to be "gentle among our flock, even as a nurse cherisheth her children," 1 Thess. ii. 7; "For the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

6. We are to "preach Christ" *boldly and courageously*,—declaring unto the house of Israel their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sin, not fearing the countenances of any, whether great or small, lest we be confounded before them: Jer. i. 17. "Thou therefore speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee," (or, as it is upon the margin, "break to pieces,") "before them." Yet this boldness should be without bitterness and indiscretion, that, when we show our zeal against men's sins, we may, at the same time, manifest our love to their persons, so as

that their consciences may be convinced, that it is from an ardent desire of salvation to their souls that we testify freely against their sins.

Lastly, We should preach by *our lives* as well as by our doctrine; and thus show, by our holy and circumspect walk and conversation, that we speak because we believe. Ministers, who build up in their own practice any piece of wickedness which, by their doctrine, they would seem to destroy, make themselves notorious transgressors, Gal. ii. 18; and thereby give a strong handle to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

III. Head of the Method was to speak of the office of gospel-ministers as they are "servants," first of Christ, and then of sinners for Jesus' sake.

1. Gospel-ministers are "servants of Christ," and it is certainly their greatest honour to be employed as "ambassadors of the Prince of the kings of the earth." Ministers derive their power and commission to exercise their office from the Lord Jesus, who is Lord and Master of the whole church, hence called "ministers of Christ;" 1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Now, as "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God;" so it is every minister's duty to be some way clear anent his call to that sacred office, and by what means he was engaged to be a servant of Christ in that station. The mediate or ordinary call to the ministry is twofold, inward and outward.

The *inward call* consists in a concurrence of those things that may tend to encourage and give clearness to a man to embrace the outward call when it shall offer in providence; namely, an evidence of fit qualifications for such a weighty work, such as experimental godliness, soundness of doctrine, and aptness to teach. But now you must observe, that it is not the mere having of these gifts that will be sufficient to clear a man's call to himself, but the trial of them notified to him by those to whom the trial of gifts is committed by the Lord Jesus, and an orderly

authoritative mission following thereupon: hence you will find the exercise of the gift, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery joined together, 1 Tim. iv. 14. So that a man's own thoughts of himself are not the rule by which he is to judge of his fitness or unfitness for the work of the ministry, but the judgment of the presbytery, to whom the trial of gifts is committed by the Lord Jesus. Again, to the inward call there concurs a singleness of aim. It may be very clearing to a man to undertake this office, if he has the testimony of his conscience that it is the glory of God, the edification of souls, and the gathering of them to Christ, that he has in his eye,—especially if there goes along with this an inward impulse, or motion of the Spirit of God upon the heart, swaying and inclining the person to undertake the office of the ministry, if the Lord, in his providence, shall open a door. Only, to prevent mistakes on this head, the persons I am speaking of ought carefully to examine, whether this impulse, which sways them to the office of the ministry beyond any other business of life, flow from the Spirit of the Lord or their own spirits. To know this, if the impulse is spiritual, or flows from the Spirit of the Lord, it will have these three necessary properties,—it will be sanctifying, regular, and qualifying. I say, if it is a spiritual impulse, it will be sanctifying and humbling, attended with an inward desire of further conformity to God in holiness, both in heart and life, and low, abasing thoughts of ourselves, as no way "sufficient for these things." Again, it will be a regular impulse, inclining a person to enter into the office of the ministry, only according to the rules laid down in the word, and not to run unsent. And, lastly, if this impulse is from the Spirit of the Lord, it will be a fitting and a qualifying impulse, determining to the use of the means which lead to such an end, such as reading, studying, praying, and the like; for the Spirit never divides the means from the end: hence, when Paul exhorts Timothy to fulfil his ministry, he exhorts him, at the same time, to give himself to reading.

The *outward call* consists in the election or choice of the

people, the trial of a man's qualifications by the presbytery, their approbation of them, and authoritative mission, by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands; and where all these concur, (especially if the person has the inward call as above described,) it is the call of God;—as is clear from the instance of the elders of Ephesus, who had no other call, and yet are owned to be set over the flock by the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28. But then,

2. As ministers are "servants of Christ," so they are the servants of Adam's family for Jesus' sake, in being "instant in season and out of season," beseeching and obtesting them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God. And that ministers may serve their Master faithfully, in serving the necessities of the souls of sinners, we ought to conform and apply our doctrine to the various cases of our hearers, so as to awaken the secure, strengthen the weak, comfort those that mourn, and convince gainsayers. Again, in serving of sinners for Jesus' sake, we should "prepare the way of the Lord," by removing all stumbling-blocks out of the way, or rather, by declaring, from the word, that they are already removed,—the law is magnified, justice is satisfied, God is reconciled, "all things are ready, therefore come to the marriage." This is the great service in which we ought to be employed about poor sinners, and every faithful minister will rejoice when the bridegroom has obtained the heart and hand of the bride. I proceed now, from what has been said, to deduce the following

Inferences—1. Hence see the necessity of preaching the gospel; says the Apostle here, "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord," and elsewhere, "Wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel." It is necessary, by the express command of the Lord Jesus, the alone King and lawgiver in his church, Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." And, in order to the perpetual discharge of this duty, the Lord Christ not only "gave apostles, prophets, and evangelists," as extraordinary and temporary officers, whose office was to expire with themselves, but he also "gave

pastors," or teachers, to be standing officers in his church unto the end of the world, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ," Eph. iv. 11, 12. And for the faithful discharge of this trust, as well as for the succession of a gospel-ministry, there is a special order given to commit this service unto "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii. 2. Again, the preaching of the gospel is necessary, as an instituted means for the conversion and salvation of sinners; for "where there is no vision the people perish." Although the preaching of the gospel has not an intrinsic virtue in itself to effectuate the salvation of sinners,—"for many are called, but few are chosen,"—yet, by the appointment of God, it is constituted the great means of our reconciliation and salvation—hence called "the word of this salvation;" and, by the power of God going along with it, it is "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." But then it must be remembered, that it is the preaching of the gospel by those who are orderly invested with an ecclesiastical office that is the ordinary instituted means for the conversion of sinners or the edification of saints; for, although private Christians may sometimes, in providence, be instrumental in the conversion or edification of their fellow-creatures,—as in the instance of the Samaritans, who believed on Christ "for the saying of the woman, which testified he told me all that ever I did," John iv. 39; yet the ordinary means appointed of God, for gathering sinners to Christ, is the preaching of the word by those who are clothed with the pastoral office. The reason is, because "faith cometh by hearing. But how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. x. 14, 15;—that is, unless they have an authoritative mission, whereby the ministry is conferred, and men authorized, as ambassadors of Christ, to preach the word of reconciliation. Hence it follows,

2. That, in the church assembled, or in the meeting of

the Lord's people for public worship, none may warrantably preach the word of God, in the name of Christ, but such as have a divine calling unto that work. For, though it is the duty of Christians to exhort and comfort one another in a private capacity, for their mutual edification; yet none can with authority preach the word but such as have the ordinary calling to the office of the ministry,—as is plain from many places of Scripture, particularly Heb. v. 4. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God;" and the forecited Rom. x. 15. "How shall they preach except they be sent?" Besides, there are peculiar duties required of ministers which are not required of other Christians, whatever gifts of the Spirit they may be endowed with, such as "feeding and taking the oversight of the flock, as they that must give account of souls," Acts xx. 28; Heb. xiii. 17;—as ambassadors for Christ, they are to "pray sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God," 2 Cor. v. 20; as faithful and wise stewards, whom the Lord hath made rulers over his household, they are to "give them their portion of meat in due season," Luke xii. 42. Therefore, you are to be aware of the dangerous opinion of the sectarians and enthusiasts, who affirm that private Christians, endowed with gifts, may preach in the name of Christ although they bear no church-office.

3. Although ministers are the church's "servants for Jesus' sake," yet they do not derive their ecclesiastical power from the people, or from the community of the faithful; nor are they servants and deputies, who govern the house of God by an authority derived from the multitude, as the first and immediate subject of ecclesiastical power. It is true, ministers are called the church's servants in our text; but then, it is not because they derive their power from the people,—for in that case they would be the servants of men and not of God,—but because they are to exercise their office as servants of Christ, for the good and benefit of his church. There is nothing indeed more plain in Scripture than that the power of choosing pastors and other officers to a particular church belongs to all the

members of it, Acts i. 23; vi. 5; xiv. 23. But then, by this election (which is no act of jurisdiction) church-members do not confer the power of the keys on the pastors or other officers chosen, but only nominate or design him or them on whom the power of that office is to be conferred by ecclesiastical ordination,—as is clear from Acts vi. 6; where you will find, that, after the whole multitude had chosen such and such persons, they set them before the apostles, who "laid their hands on them," or ordained them to their office by prayer; and herein the apostles acted, not according to their extraordinary character, for, in that case, there would have been no need to desire the people to look out for fit persons from among themselves, —the apostles could have done it by infallible inspiration, had they acted as apostles; but it is plain that they acted as ordinary ministers of Christ in the whole of this matter. It follows then, that as all church-officers are instituted by the Lord Jesus, so the power belonging to them is immediately derived from him; but the way and manner of being installed into, or put in possession of any office of the church, particularly the office of the ministry, or the ordinary way of deriving the power and authority belonging to the ministerial office from the Lord Jesus, is by the authoritative mission, or ordination of the presbytery, unto which the election or choice of the people is previously necessary. The disjoining of these two, namely, the authoritative mission and the choice of the people, which the Spirit of God has so strictly united in Scripture, is at the bottom of the dangerous mistake, which those of the Independent way run into upon the one hand,—namely, in placing the whole of the ecclesiastical vocation in the people without the presbytery,—and those in the Established church, on the other hand, who place the whole of the ecclesiastical vocation in the judicatories of the church without the people.

4. Is Christ Jesus the Lord the great subject of gospel-preaching? then let us, who are ministers, "determine not to know any thing" among our hearers "save Jesus Christ

and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Let us endeavour, as stewards of the mysteries of God, to open the door of the house of mercy as wide as to let in the greatest sinner, to whom we shall have access to preach these glad tidings; let us endeavour to lead them to Christ, as the only refuge to shelter them from sin and wrath,—as the only physician who can heal them of all their diseases,—and as the only magazine and storehouse from whence they are to be supplied with grace, and glory, and every good thing. Let us endeavour to point out Christ unto sinners, as made of God unto them "wisdom" to instruct and teach them, "righteousness" to justify them, "sanctification" to renew and cleanse them, and "redemption" to save them;—in a word, as the inexhaustible fountain of all grace here, and eternal glory hereafter. Let us essay to preach "Christ Jesus the Lord" both in our sermons and in our ministerial and Christian walk. Let us beware of preaching "ourselves," and setting up our own reason in the room of divine revelation, and of preaching out of a vain ostentation of our own parts and abilities, whether natural or acquired, and of studying to please men; but let a tender concern for the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls, animate us in the whole of our ministerial work. Let us, out of love to Christ himself, put an high value upon the souls of sinners, and spare no pains in preaching, catechising, visiting, and conversing with them for their instruction and edification. Let us remember that awful charge which is given us, "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,"—namely, that we "preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2; "and in so doing, we shall both save ourselves and them that hear us." Let us be "valiant for the truth" in this day of darkness and treading down in our valley of vision,—the more that the wicked are endeavouring to "make void" the laws and ordinances of Christ. Let us love them the more, and contend the more earnestly for them, as "good

soldiers of Christ." Let us set our faces like a flint against the current of defection and apostasy of our day, and let us not be afraid of all that men can do, for "the truth shall make us free." Let us then go on in our preaching and witnessing work in the strength of the Lord, leaning upon his faithfulness in that promise, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

Lastly, Are ministers to "preach Christ Jesus the Lord?" then it is the indispensable duty of the hearers to believe in him, and receive him as he is offered in the gospel. We have been essaying to tell you what it is to "preach Christ," and to lay before you some of those precious truths that are contained and wrapped up under that glorious and unfathomable name, "Christ Jesus the Lord;" and now we are come to require your cordial assent unto the gospel-report concerning Christ, as the only ordinance of God for your salvation,—there remains "no other sacrifice for sin," "neither is there salvation in any other." Jehovah, a gracious God, who gives being unto his words of promise, is just now making a grant of his Son unto every one of you in this company, as the all of our salvation, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him." Sirs, will you refuse the matchless and "unspeakable gift" of God? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Will you stand it out against the command of God, binding upon every one of you here present? "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John iv. 23. Will ye "reject the counsel of God against yourselves?" will you "wrong your own souls" so far? O sirs, think you nothing of it, that God condescends to be "your God?" that the Lord Jesus Christ, Immanuel, makes over himself, his person, offices, and all the fruits of his mediation to be yours? that he condescends to be your Husband, to betrothe you to himself for ever,—your Shepherd to feed you, your Leader and Commander to guide and protect you, and your Saviour to redeem you both by price and power. Thus saith the Lord Jesus unto every one of you, "Look

unto me, and be ye saved." Behold, we set him before you, and beseech you, in his stead, that ye be reconciled unto God:—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely;" and, "if you will not do so, behold you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Your sin, in neglecting this "great salvation," will find you out in the day when "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and shall wail because of him."

I conclude with a word to you who are the members of this Associate Congregation of Lintoun. Sirs, you have called a minister in a witnessing way, as a company of Seceders from the present judicatories, because of their manifest apostasy from the covenanted reformation of this church; and we are now going about the solemn work of ordaining a minister among you by prayer and imposition of hands, as a presbytery constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus, and associated together for the exercise of the government and discipline of his house, according to his word, and the Reformation-principles of this church founded thereon, in opposition to the strong current of defection and backsliding from the same at this day, and for the help and relief of the Lord's oppressed heritage through the land. As we are, on this day of fasting and humiliation, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to ordain him to dispense the bread of life amongst you, as a minister of Jesus Christ, whom you have unanimously chosen and called, so see that ye "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls," James i. 21. Receive the gospel from the mouth of your minister, as if God were speaking to you by him, for he is an ambassador to you in Christ's stead; therefore, with reverence and godly fear, entertain the message which he brings you in his Master's name. Pray much for your minister, if you would desire his labours to be successful among you, Rom. xv. 30. Pray that he may be abundantly furnished for his work, from him who has "received gifts for men." Pray that the word, which he delivers unto you, may come "in the demonstration of

the Spirit and of power," and that he may be directed to speak a word in season to your particular cases. Beware of listening to the reproaches of a wicked world, who will endeavour, though most groundlessly, to calumniate and defame your minister, for no other reason, at the bottom, whatever way they may colour it, but because he is espousing and defending the borne-down interest of Christ at this day. Thus you know they treated the Lord's messengers and witnesses of old, "Report, say they, and we will report;" therefore, see that you highly esteem your minister, and "love him for his work's sake," 1 Thess. v. 13. Submit to the discipline which shall be exercised, according to the word of God, by him, in conjunction with the elders of this congregation; Heb. xiii. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." And as your minister is to communicate to you in spirituals, so I make no doubt but you see it to be your duty to communicate to him in temporals; Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things;" for "so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. And since your great design in calling your minister, and ours in ordaining him, is, that he may "preach Christ Jesus the Lord," so see that ye account the Lord Jesus Christ worthy of all acceptation; and, in so doing, when your minister comes to give an account of his stewardship, he will be able to do it "with joy, and not with grief."

Finally, Since you are a witnessing congregation, as I said, therefore see that you be rooted and grounded in the faith, and "established in the present truth,"—that you "be not carried about with every wind of doctrine, and the cunning artifices of them who lie in wait to deceive." Sirs, this is a day wherein many, like Ephraim, are "faintly turning back;" and if you, or any of you, should fall away, or turn cold and indifferent about the cause of Christ, which you are now espousing, after such a solemn profession which you are this day making before many witnesses, what handle will you give to the enemy to blaspheme?

and what unspeakable wrong will you bring upon your own souls?—for, "if any man draw back," saith the Lord, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Oh, then, seek to be found in the clifts of the Rock of ages, interested in Christ by a vital union with him, and then there shall be no fear of you, though the floods of tribulation should lift up their voice and make a mighty noise;—he that "sits upon the floods" will "strengthen, stablish, and settle you;"—"the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and lead you unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes."

SERMON III.*

CHRIST THE SOLE AND WONDERFUL DOER IN THE WORK OF MAN'S REDEMPTION.

JUDGES xiii. 19.—"The angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on."

THESE words give a compendious account of the wonderful transaction of our redemption, together with our privilege and duty thereanent: "The angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on." The Angel did all,—and all that he did was wondrously done; Manoah and his wife were only spectators,—they looked on, and beheld him doing the whole of the work. In the words you may notice,

1. The great DOER: he is named in the text by way of supplement, "The angel." Who this angel was may be gathered from the word JEHOVAH, immediately before, in the same verse: "Manoah took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD;" and the words of our text, which follow, may be read, "And HE," viz. the LORD or JEHOVAH, "did wondrously;"—intimating that the doer here is the living and true God. And likewise, who this angel was may be gathered from the verse immediately preceding the text: "The angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" or "wonderful?" as on the margin. Whereby it evidently appears that the angel, who did wondrously, is the same angel whose name is "the Wonderful," Isa. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:

* An Action Sermon, preached at Glasgow, June 23, 1745.

—his name shall be called Wonderful." So that the angel here is certainly the Lord Jesus Christ, who is frequently, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, called by this name. Gen. xlviii. 16. says Jacob there to Joseph, concerning his sons, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." The Angel who is the redeemer from all evil, can be no other but Christ himself,—whose name is Jesus, "because he saves his people from their sins," which are the greatest of all evils. You may see also Exod. xxiii. 20; says the Lord there to Moses, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee;—beware of him, and obey his voice,—for my name is in him:" which can be understood of no other but Christ, in whom the name of God is essentially, and in whom it is most eminently displayed. Again, he is called "the angel of the Lord," Psal. xxxiv. 7. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them:" and the angel, or "messenger of the covenant," Mal. iii. 1. That by "the angel of the Lord," in this chapter, we are to understand Christ, will appear, if you consider the angel's command to Manoah, ver. 16. "If thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord;"—thereby giving Manoah to understand that the angel who spake to him was truly and properly God: and accordingly you see, in obedience to this command, Manoah offers his burnt-offering unto the LORD, or JEHOVAH, in the verse where our text is. And after what was done so wondrously, ver. 20. it is said that Manoah knew that the Angel of the Lord was indeed the living and true God; as may be gathered by comparing ver. 21. "Then Manoah knew that he was an ANGEL of the Lord," with ver. 22. "And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen GOD." Now, the reason why Christ is called the Angel of the Lord is, because, that though he be the Father's equal, yet, as Mediator, he condescended willingly to be his Father's messenger, to be sent on the great errand of glorifying God, in the salvation of an innumerable company of mankind lost.

2. In the words you have the *manner* of his doing—he

"did wondrously;" or, as the words are rendered by some, "He wrought wondrously in his doing." What he did is matter of everlasting wonder. You have an account of this wonderful work done by the Angel of the covenant in the verse following the text: "For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar." For understanding hereof, you would know that the sacrifice that was offered, on this occasion, was a "burnt-offering," ver. 16. "If thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." This was one of the chief kind of offerings instituted among the Jews; for, when this sort of offering is mentioned, it is always said to be a "sweet savour unto the Lord," Lev. i. 17. and many other places. The beasts thus offered were to be slain, cut to pieces, and wholly burnt upon the altar,—intimating, that though we deserved to be consumed by the wrath of God, yet Christ, as our Surety, was, "through the eternal Spirit, *to offer himself* without spot to God;" and, in the meritorious sacrifice of himself, to make atonement for sin, and endure the whole of that wrath which would utterly have consumed us. Again, the fire that was preserved on the altar, both in the tabernacle and temple, whereby the burnt-offering was consumed, came "first from heaven,"—intimating, that it was the love of God that was the spring of our redemption; for, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" "God spared not his own Son." And it is more than probable, that the fire which consumed this burnt-offering, which Manoah offered, was kindled by the Angel of the Lord himself, even as he miraculously caused fire to rise up out of the rock before; whereof you read, chap. vi. 21. "The angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed" them:—intimating, that it was out of his own free love that he undertook this great work of our redemption; for, "his delights were with the sons of men." And, lastly, it is observed, in the verse following the text, whereupon

we are now speaking, that "the angel ascended in the flame of the altar:"—denoting the success of his expiatory sacrifice; "when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The flame of the altar consumed the sacrifice that was upon it, and yet his ascending in that flame plainly signified the merit of his oblation,—that it was a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God; for he suffered these things, and then entered into his glory.

3. In the words you have the part that Manoah and his wife acted with respect unto this wonderful work,—it is said only, "that they *looked on*:" "The angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on." The Angel did *all* in this wondrous work,—he was the only doer;—Manoah and his wife had no share in point of doing, they only looked on and saw him do all himself. But though Manoah and his wife only "looked on," yet they were not mere idle spectators; for they were filled with wonder and reverence at this great sight, the true "bush burning and not consumed;" ver. 20. "Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground." And though there was some mixture of unbelief in Manoah, arising from a common opinion which then prevailed, that they should die because they had seen God, ver. 22; yet his faith was strengthened by his wife's telling him that the wondrous doing of the Angel, which they had been witnesses to, was no evidence at all of a *killing* but of a *saving* God; ver. 23. "His wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things:"—namely, all those things that are imported in the Angel's doing wondrously; which certainly must imply faith, on their part, in the promised Messiah, thus exhibiting himself.

From the words thus explained, in connection with the context, I deduce the following doctrine:—

Doctrine—'That as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant, is the wonderful and only doer in the

great work of our redemption; so it is the privilege and duty of mankind sinners to look on. "The angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on."'

In speaking upon this subject, I shall essay, through divine assistance,

I. To show that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only doer in the great work of our redemption.

II. Inquire in what respects he did "wondrously."

III. Speak of the privilege and duty of "looking on," and beholding the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously.

IV. Deduce some Inferences for the improvement.

I. I am to show—"That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only doer in the great work of our redemption." This will appear,

1. From the particular choice that the Father hath made of him, as the only fit person for this great undertaking; Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him." Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."

2. The solemn attestation from heaven, that is given once and again unto his commission, to this great work, is a proof that he is the only doer therein, 2 Pet. i. 17. "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" "For him hath God the Father sealed," John vi. 27.

3. His own testimony, who is the faithful Witness, is a sufficient evidence thereof; Isa. lxiii. 5. "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me."

4. That he is the only doer in the great work of redemption, may appear from the circumstances of sinners of mankind, whom he had to redeem. They are described to be in such circumstances, as to be out of all capacity to do anything for themselves. They are said to be "without

strength," Rom. v. 6; to be as helpless as a child new-born, Ezek. xvi. 6; yea, to be actually "dead," both in a spiritual and legal sense, Eph. ii. 5. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

5. That Christ is the only doer in this great work, will appear from the tenor of the covenant of grace, which was made with him; wherein he, as the Head and Surety, was bound to pay the whole debt, owing by an elect world, in virtue of a broken covenant of works; for, "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all." Accordingly he says himself, Matt. iii. 15. "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." This he had engaged unto in the bond of service which he gave unto his Father, and which was cheerfully accepted of by him, Isa. xlix. 3. "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Agreeably to which, he says, Psal. xl. 6. "Mine ears hast thou bored." Thus you see that Christ is the only doer in the great work of our redemption.

II. The second Head of the Method was to "Inquire in what respects the Angel of the Lord *did wondrously* in this great work."

1. He "did wondrously"—in engaging, from eternity, to answer all demands of law and justice in our room and stead. When the plan of this work, in all that he had to do and suffer, was laid before him, he cheerfully undertook it; then said he, "Lo, I come." Whereupon the love of God, which gave rise to the whole, is expressed in terms of the greatest delight and complacency, Jer. xxx. 21. "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord."

2. He "did wondrously"—in appointing, as Head of the Church, that there should be a typical representation of his substitution many ages before he was actually sacrificed for us. Being the Head of the Old as well as the New Testament church, he appointed in the Old Testament dispensation that beasts should be slain in sacrifice, as a standing pledge of his taking away sin, "in the fulness of time," by the sacrifice of himself; and upon account of the

early institution of sacrifices, as typical of his meritorious oblation, it is that he is said to be "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

3. "The Angel of the Lord did wondrously"—in the assumption of our nature. God, in the person of the Son, assumed the human nature into union with himself; or, which is the same thing, the Son of God, being from eternity a Divine person, the same self-existent and independent God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, did, "in the fulness of time," actually assume the human nature—a true body and a reasonable soul—into union with his own divine person, without permitting it to exist one moment by itself. This assumption of our nature into his own divine person, was the peculiar act of the Son personally considered, Heb. ii. 14, 16. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.—For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." And hereupon the union of the two natures, of God and man, is fixed in his glorious person, unalterably, for ever, Matt. i. 23. He who was conceived and born of a virgin, is "Immanuel, God with us;" "God made manifest in the flesh:"—which could be no other way than by the union of the two natures in the same person; and yet this union is such a one, that each nature retains its own essential properties without the least composition or confusion. The divine nature, in the person of the Son, is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and possessed of all divine perfections; and continues to be so unchangeably for ever. The human nature, in the same person, was born, yielded obedience, died, and rose again; yet it is the same person that acts all these things:—and therefore it follows, that whatever Christ did, or continues to do as Mediator, is to be considered as the act or work of the person of him who is God-man. Herein indeed it is that the "Angel of the Lord did wondrously," even in assuming our nature to his own divine person. This is the foundation upon which the whole plan of our redemption is executed, and is the

greatest wonder in heaven and earth, and the highest demonstration of infinite love;—that He, who "humbles himself to behold things in heaven," should condescend not only to behold things in this lower world, but to be born in it,—and not only to be born, but to become a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,"—to be "despised and rejected of men,"—yea, to become a "curse, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law." May we not, then, join with the Apostle in saying, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness?" And that "the Angel of the Lord did wondrously" in this matter, will further appear, if you consider that the human nature, as it stands in his glorious person, is the channel in which the "fulness of the Godhead" is conveyed and communicated unto us; "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" that "out of his fulness all we might receive, and grace for grace."

4. "The Angel of the Lord did wondrously"—in his obedience to the law, which was violated and broken by all his spiritual seed, in the first Adam, their head and representative in the covenant of works:—according to the tenor of which covenant all things in the law were to be obeyed, and that with the highest degree of perfection, and this perfect obedience to be continued unto the end. In this respect "the Angel of the Lord did wondrously;" for, having assumed a holy human nature into his divine person, as you were hearing, he, as second Adam, and representative of all his spiritual seed, did yield obedience to the law in all points, and that in the highest degree of perfection, to the very end of the race that was set before him:—for, he "became obedient unto the death," yea, "he magnified the law, and made it honourable" by his obedience,—and thus he recovered a title to eternal life, upon the footing of perfect obedience, performed by himself as a public person, for all his spiritual seed, who had "sinned and come short of the glory of God."

5. He "did wondrously" in his sacrifice,—for he offered "himself," Tit. ii. 14. "He gave *himself* for us." The

whole human nature, soul and body, was the sacrifice,—the altar that sanctified the offering, and bore it up under its sufferings, was his own divine nature, Heb. ix. 14. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God." This oblation, or offering, was the act of the whole person,—as the divine nature bore up the human in its sufferings, and offered it, so this offering was the voluntary acting of all the faculties of his rational soul. O herein "did the Angel of the Lord most wondrously." Although the matter of the sacrifice was the human nature, yet the Priest who offered it was the person of Him who is God-man,—and this was that which gave dignity and efficacy to this wonderful oblation. He "did so wondrously" that he fully satisfied the highest demands of justice, Eph. v. 2. "He hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour."

6. He "did wondrously"—in the way and manner of his finishing the purchase of our redemption; for he did it in the way of "bowing his head and giving up the ghost." And this he did most cheerfully: "The cup," says he, "which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—He did it most faithfully: he left no part of the work undone,—for before he gave the finishing stroke in his death it is said, that he knew "that all things were accomplished," John xix. 28. —He did it most submissively,—in obedience to the commandment which he received of his Father, John x. 18; for "he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

7. "The Angel of the Lord did wondrously"—in his making an "end of sin," Dan. ix. 24. The human nature, as it stands in every individual of Adam's family, had sin charged upon it, and was defiled and deformed thereby,—and the whole race would have gone on in sinning, and bearing implacable enmity against God for ever, as well as the angels that fell are now doing:—but the Angel of the

Lord hath done wondrously, in putting an end to sinning, in the human nature, as assumed by himself to his own divine person; whereby he not only presented the human nature unto God "without sin, holy, harmless, and undefiled," but therein likewise made atonement for our sins:—and by virtue of this assumption of an holy human nature, and his atoning sacrifice therein, it is that an infallible security is given that there shall be an eternal period put to sinning, in every one of his spiritual seed, so soon as they enter the threshold of glory at death; for then "the former things shall pass away,"—he will then "present" all his members "to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but" perfectly "holy, and without blemish," Eph. v. 27.

8. He "did wondrously"—in the conquest he obtained over all our spiritual enemies. He took the field alone,—he set his face "like a flint," saying, "Who is mine adversary? Let him come near unto me." And accordingly, as "the day of vengeance was in his heart," so "he trode all his adversaries in his anger, and trampled them in his fury;" and, like briars and thorns, they were consumed before him. He "foiled kings of great armies," and did it in a way that was never heard tell of before—even by his "death," Col. ii. 15. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," *i. e.*, in his "cross;" or, in "himself," as in the margin. He hath wrested the keys of hell and of death out of Satan's hand, and made a public show of them in his own, as an evident token of his complete victory, saying, "I have the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18.

9. He "did wondrously"—in his resurrection; for he rose again by his "own power," John ii. 19. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" meaning 'the temple of his body," ver. 21. which he himself would raise up within that time. Never any rose, or shall rise, by their own power but himself; and his doing so is adduced as an argument that he is truly and properly God, Rom. i. 4. "Declared to be the Son of God with power,—

by the resurrection from the dead." He did wondrously also in his resurrection, inasmuch as he rose discharged of all the debt of an elect world; for, "he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25.

10. "The Angel of the Lord did wondrously"—in his ascension; for he ascended "in the flame of the altar." This is the particular instance mentioned in the context, wherein the Angel did wondrously, as appears by comparing the text with the words immediately following: "The angel did wondrously;—For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar." His ascending in the "flame" presupposed all the other wondrous acts which we have named in the preceding Heads;—such as, his engagement from eternity, and his actual incarnation and satisfaction in the "fulness of time:"—so that this deed of the Angel, in ascending in the "flame of the altar," was designed to give a compendious view, suitable to that dispensation, of the whole work of redemption, which was in due time to be accomplished in and by the person of the Messiah. More particularly, as the "sacrifice" on the altar was typical of the death of Christ, so his "ascending in the flame of the altar" typified the merit and success of his death. For the "flame" of the altar was designed to represent the wrath of God, which might justly have consumed all the children of men, as the burnt-offerings were upon the altar; but his ascending in the flame of the altar plainly signified, that the wrath of God, which was to kindle upon him as the Surety, should be endured wholly by him,—and, in consequence thereof, he should ascend as the Forerunner for us within the vail, to carry in the merit and efficacy of his blood within the upper sanctuary, and thus to prepare a place for us.

To what has been said, I shall only add, very briefly, that as the Angel of the Lord hath done wondrously in the purchase, so he doth wondrously in the application of redemption, by his word and Spirit. He raises the dead

into newness of life,—he calls the things that are not as though they were,—he gives eye-sight to them that are born blind,—he looses the bands of prisoners,—pulls down the strongholds that are in the heart,—brings those that are afar off near,—he cancels the hand-writing that was against us, and contrary to us,—and makes those that have lien among the pots to become beautiful by his comeliness put upon them.—He doth wondrously, in maintaining his own work of grace in the soul, in the midst of all the corruption that is there, till he "bring forth judgment unto victory."—He doth wondrously in his intercession; for it is his appearing, upon the merit of his sacrifice, in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. It is just "his will" that he himself, and all blessing, be ours, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."—The Angel of the Lord doth wondrously, in gathering and preserving a church to himself upon earth. He gathers his church by means contemptible in the eye of the world; for, by "the foolishness of preaching he saves them that believe." A word spoken with power will make the stoutest heart to yield, when all the flatteries and threatenings of the world cannot accomplish such an end. As he gathers, so he preserves his church most wondrously; for, though they are but a "little flock," a "small remnant,"—yea, though they are, moreover, as the "lily among the thorns," and as "sheep in the midst of wolves,"—yet he restrains and bridles the fury of the adversary, so as the gates of hell cannot prevail either by power or policy; for a seed has, and "shall do service to him. His name shall endure for ever."—And, to add no more upon this Head, he will do wondrously when he "comes at the last day, in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;" for then he will raise the dead,—sist them before his judgment-seat,—make an eternal separation betwixt the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares,—he will sentence the wicked into everlasting fire,—and carry the whole innumerable company of the redeemed from among

men with him into heaven, and present them unto his Father, saying, "Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me." And then he himself, who hath done so wondrously, will continue to be the object of their eternal praise and wonder, saying, "with a loud voice," as it is Rev. v. 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—I now proceed to the

III. Head in the Method, which was to—"Speak of the privilege and duty of 'looking on,' or 'beholding' the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously." Upon this point, I shall briefly inquire,

First, What is imported in the *privilege* of "looking on."

Secondly, What is the *nature* of this "on-looking," as it is a *duty*.

First, What is imported in the *privilege* of "looking on."

1. It imports, that mankind sinners have a near concern in all that was done so wondrously by the Angel of the Lord; all that he did and suffered, in the executing of all his mediatorial offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, was for us. His very errand into the world was "to seek and save that which was lost." All the gifts he hath received are for us,—for he hath "received gifts for men." All that ever he did so wondrously, as Mediator, he did it in a public character, as representing his spiritual seed among men. Thus, he assumed a holy human nature as the Head, and therefore all the members are, in law-reckoning, born holy in him,—he became obedient unto death, as their Head, and therefore all their debt is paid in him,—he rose as their Head, and therefore they are all discharged in him,—for he was "raised again for our justification;"—he hath ascended as their Head, and therefore they are set down in heavenly places in him. Sirs, you have such a near concern in all that the Angel of the Lord hath done so wondrously, that he directs his call unto you only, sinners of mankind, exclusive of the angels that fell, Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is unto the sons of men."

2. Though you have such a near concern, as hath been just now said, yet your privilege of looking on and beholding the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously, imports that you are utterly unable and incapable to have any share in this great work yourselves, either in point of doing or suffering. You want the principle of perfect obedience, a soul perfectly holy; and, therefore, "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Since your nature is corrupted your obedience cannot be perfect, either as to parts or degrees; and therefore no obedience at all, in law-reckoning. And as for suffering for sin, it must either be infinite in value or endless in duration;—there can be no infinite worth in the sufferings of finite creatures;—and if their sufferings are endless in duration, they must be miserable for ever. So that your being privileged to "look on, and behold the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously," says, that you can have no share in that great work yourselves; "none of us can redeem our brother, or give unto God a ransom for him." Hence it follows,

3. That the privilege of "looking on" imports, that the whole work was entered upon and finished by the Angel of the Lord himself. He is the only doer, as you were hearing on the first Head, and he hath completely finished what he undertook to do, as is clear by his own testimony, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

4. The privilege of "looking on" imports, that all that the Angel of the Lord undertook to do, and hath done so wondrously, for the redemption of mankind sinners, is "revealed" and "manifested" to us in the word of the gospel. "Looking on" supposes an object present:—what was in the text present unto the senses of Manoah and his wife, is to us more firmly and solidly present in the word of faith; for the word of prophecy, or the faithful word of a God that cannot lie, is more sure and steadfast than any sensible representation whatsoever, 2 Pet. i. 18, 19. "This voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure

word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."—So much for the privilege of "looking on." I shall,

Secondly, Inquire what is the *nature* of this "on-looking," as it is a *duty*. The nature of faith is frequently expressed in Scripture under the notion of "looking" or "beholding," Isa. xlv. 22. "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth;" chap. lxv. 1. "I said, *Behold* me, *behold* me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." Now, the metaphor of "looking on" or "beholding" is very fit to express the nature of faith, on a twofold account; both because it includes a *receiving* of the object, and likewise a firm *persuasion* about it.

1. "Looking on" necessarily includes a *receiving* of the object. The eye of the body does nothing else with respect unto the objects that are presented unto it but receive them; and therefore "looking on" is very fit to express the nature of faith, which is a receiving of what is presented, or brought near in the word of promise, John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power," or privilege, "to become the sons of God." The receiving nature of faith plainly says that we have nothing of our own, and at the same time that the whole unsearchable riches of Christ are brought to our hand; and therefore, as faith receives all, it cannot but ascribe all the glory to the Giver, and the freedom of his grace, Rom. iv. 16. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace."

2. "Looking on" includes in it a firm *persuasion* about the object we behold. When we are looking upon a person doing or suffering, we are firmly persuaded of what we see; so "looking on," or "beholding the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously,"—as all that he hath done concerns us, and is revealed unto us,—must include a firm persuasion corresponding to that revelation. Now, what is here presented unto the eye of faith, in the word, is, that "the Angel of the Lord hath done all" that you were hearing above, and infinitely more than can be told,—and that he hath done all these things "for you,"—and therefore him-

self, his righteousness, and salvation is yours, in the grant and offer thereof; and consequently "looking on," or "believing," in this case, must be a persuasion that it is so, upon the ground of God's faithfulness and veracity, speaking in his own word:—the ground of the persuasion of faith being infinitely more firm and solid than the ground of any persuasion we can have arising from our senses, because it is the infallible testimony of a God that cannot lie, whose word is as unchangeable as his being. Therefore, when it is revealed to us that "God so loved the world, *as to give* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"—the language of faith, corresponding hereunto, must be, as in Acts xv. 11. "We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." Hence it easily follows that this persuasion of faith must take in the particular application and use-making of its object, for all the intents and purposes for which he is exhibited unto us,—for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

IV. I proceed now to deduce some Inferences for the Application.

1. Hence see what is become of the covenant of works, which was broken by the first Adam, and all his posterity in him,—it is fulfilled by the Angel of the Lord, the second Adam, in what he hath done so wondrously; and the fulfilment thereof by him, both as to the precept and penalty, was the very condition of the covenant of grace, that was made with him as the head of his spiritual seed. No work nor deed of ours, no not faith itself, can be the entitling condition of the covenant of grace. Our right and title to eternal life can be founded on nothing else but Christ's fulfilling all righteousness for us; for he was "made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2. Is the Angel of the Lord the only doer in the great work of our redemption? then hence see that all you, who are convinced of your utter inability to do for yourselves,

have the best ground to lippen to him for relief, out of the several straits and difficulties wherewith you may at present be distressed. Why, the Angel of the Lord did wondrously in the purchase of your redemption, and he continues to do so likewise in the application thereof. Whatever, then, be your present exercise or trial, rely upon him as the only doer for you, and you shall have an outgate.—Are you oppressed with a body of sin and death, and with such a sense of heart-wandering, hardness, and deadness that you know not what to do, and are afraid to venture unto the Lord's table in such a dismal case? Well, depend upon the Angel of the Lord, as the only doer for you, upon the ground of his own word, wherein he hath said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." He hath made an end of sin that sin might be finished in you at last. Look to him for quickening and reviving, because he hath said, "I am come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly." Look to him for heart-melting, and heart-loathing on the account of your sins, upon the ground of that word, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations."

Again, are you convinced of the necessity of faith, without which you cannot "look on and behold the Angel doing wondrously?" and are you complaining of your blindness, and acknowledging your utter impotency to open your own eyes? Well, here is the only doer for you, who hath it in his commission to "open the eyes of the blind." Trust to him, as the "author and finisher of faith," upon the ground of this word, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

Further, is fellowship and communion with him, in his own ordinances, the "one thing" you desire and seek after on this great day of the feast? and yet, in the meantime, are ye complaining, as it is Job xxiii. 8, 9. "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot

behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him?" Well, in this case, the only doer for you is giving you this kindly challenge, which you have Isa. xl. 27, 28. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Therefore, O trust that he will come according to his promise, Exod. xx. 24. "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." —"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer," Isa. liv. 7, 8.

Are you complaining of woful backslidings and decays, and afraid to come to the Lord's table lest he have no pleasure in you on these accounts? Well, there is ground of hope in that word, Jer. iii. 22. "I will heal your backslidings."—"Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord," ver. 1.

Upon the whole:—since the Angel of the Lord does all, put all your work in his hand,—your hearing, your praying, your praising, your communicating, and the whole of your warfare,—put all in his hand that he may do it for you; for "it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." He is here present this day demanding employment from every one of you, to do all for you, and that freely, "without money and without price;" saying, as it is Luke xviii. 41. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Therefore, come to him with all your sins, that they may be pardoned, because he hath paid the ransom,—with all your wants, that they may be supplied, because "it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,"—with all your petitions, that they may be answered, because he hath said, John xiv. 14. "Whatsoever you shall ask in my name, I will do it."

Come to him with all your doubts, that they may be solved, because he hath the "tongue of the learned," and can speak a "word in season to the weary." Come to him for all you need; for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand:" and he is "ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."

3. Hence see the ground of a sinner's justification before God. Surely it is not "by works of righteousness which we have done,"—for "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,"—but upon what the Angel hath done so wondrously, both in respect of his perfect obedience to the law, and also in respect of his enduring the wrath due to our sin. This his meritorious doing and dying, or his perfect and satisfactory obedience unto death, being imputed to us, is the sole ground of our justification before God. It is not any grace wrought in us, nor anything done by us, no not the act of believing itself, or any act of obedience whatsoever, that is imputed to us for righteousness; it is only what the Angel of the Lord did so wondrously, in doing and dying in our room, that is imputed to us for the whole of our righteousness in the sight of God: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ," Rom. iii. 24. We are all by nature in a state of guilt and condemnation; but, in the "day of power," being united to him who hath done wondrously, his whole righteousness becomes ours for our justification before God,—his suffering being the ground of our pardon, and his obedience the ground of our being accepted as righteous in his sight. O be persuaded to submit unto this righteousness, which is wrought out by the Angel of the Lord, in the holy human nature which he assumed to his own divine person! This is the only righteousness that hath worth in it to counterbalance all accusations from law or justice. It is the only righteousness that hath been infinitely pleasing and acceptable to God; for "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake," Isa. xlii. 21.—the only righteousness that is everlasting, being a robe that will never wax old, and never wear out, through

eternity,—and it is the only righteousness in which we may enter the lists with death, and stand in the presence of God accepted for ever; for we are "accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6.

4. Hence see the reason why believers are not under the law, as a covenant, to be either justified or condemned thereby;—the reason is, the Angel of the Lord hath done wondrously, in magnifying the law in their room. Hence it is said of believers, Rom. vi. 14. that they "are not under the law." They are not under the *precept* of the law as a covenant, requiring perfect obedience as a condition of life; because, in this respect, Christ, as a new-covenant Head, hath given obedience thereunto in their stead, and thereby fulfilled the condition they were bound to in the first Adam, Rom. v. 19. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." They are not under the *threatening* of the law as a covenant, binding over to death on account of transgression, because Christ, as their Head, hath paid the whole penalty; for he hath "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" and therefore there can be "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." So that the believer is "dead to the law," in respect of justification, that he might "live unto God," in respect of sanctification. Here is good news, the law is fulfilled by Christ as a covenant, that it might be put into our hands as a rule of duty; and whatever is required of us by the law in point of duty, there is strength and furniture secured in the promise for the performance thereof, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." You are not now required to *do* in order to *live*,—which was the tenor of the first covenant; but *life* is promised, as the principle and foundation of all acceptable *doing*, Isa. xxxviii. 19. "The *living*, the *living*, he shall praise thee."

5. Hence see the necessity of the satisfaction of Christ, to answer all demands of law and justice. Since the Angel of the Lord hath done so wondrously, there behoved to be

a necessity for his so doing. There was indeed no necessity lying upon God to save fallen men more than the fallen angels; but since, out of his own free love and good pleasure, he purposed the salvation of an innumerable company of mankind lost, it was necessary that this should be done, in a consistency with the honour of all his attributes and perfections, because his own glory is his highest end in all that he doth. In order, therefore, that mercy might have an honourable egress among sinners of mankind, it was necessary that, since the threatening of the law was founded in the very nature of God, his truth and veracity therein should be preserved,—that his unspotted holiness should be vindicated,—and that his impartial justice should be satisfied in its highest demands. All this is obvious, if you consider that these perfections are essential to the nature of God, and therefore their honour and glory cannot be dispensed with,—for God "cannot deny himself." Now, this being the case, the Angel of the Lord, according to his undertaking and engagement from eternity, hath done wondrously, in making "mercy and truth to meet together, righteousness and peace to kiss each other," in himself, as God-man, fulfilling all righteousness in our room, to the eternal glory of all the perfections of God, which would otherwise have stood as so many insuperable mountains in the way of the sinner's salvation. Accordingly, you find that this necessity of a satisfaction, in order to the venting of mercy in a consistency with the honour of justice, is what our Lord himself asserts, Luke xxiv. 26. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

6. Hence see that there is no natural or necessary connexion between our best moral doings and the favour of God;—this would be a disparagement to what the Angel hath done so wondrously. He is the only doer in the great work of our salvation; the connexion is stated betwixt his doing in our room, and obtaining eternal redemption for us. The promise of life is made unto the perfect obedience of the Surety; and whenever this obedience is imputed to

us, our title to eternal life is thereby secured; for "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23.

7. Hence see that there is no access for a sinner into the presence of God but through a Mediator. Had not the Angel done wondrously, in opening a "new and living way" into the presence of God for us, by his obedience unto death, the justice and holiness of God, like the cherubim with a flaming sword, would otherwise have made the way to pardon and life inaccessible. There is not the least encouragement for a guilty sinner to come into the presence of an absolute God, Isa. xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites:- who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" And, therefore, to represent the Object of worship merely as a Creator and Preserver, without any relation to Christ, cannot but have a tendency to worm out the exercise of prayer, and to be an effectual bar in the way of all trust and confidence in God, which is grounded wholly on the revelation of his grace and good-will through Christ, as the only way of access unto him, John xiv. 6. "Jesus saith,—I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." So that it is the revelation of redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God's grace, that is the strongest motive and encouragement for a guilty sinner to come into the presence of an offended God, Psal. cxxx. 4. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

8. Hence see that none of mankind were capable to reason out to themselves the knowledge of the way of salvation, which is necessary to their eternal happiness. If this could be done, there had been no occasion for a revelation of what the Angel of the Lord did so wondrously. For the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, such as, that "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the

world, received up into glory;" or, that the Son of God should be incarnate, make satisfaction for sin, and be exhibited unto a lost world for salvation, are truths of such a transcendent nature that the mind of man could never have had the remotest conception of them if they had not been revealed:—and now that they are brought to light by the gospel, there can be no salvation without the knowledge of them; for "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," but that of Jesus,—nor is there another way of "putting away sin but by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. Hence it follows that the doctrine of the salvation of heathens, while destitute of divine revelation, must be the very foundation of Deism; for it amounts to nothing less than this, that mankind may be saved by the light of nature, without any supernatural revelation,—quite contrary to Scripture, which asserts, in plainest terms, that "where there is no vision the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18; and contrary to the doctrine of our Confession, which affirms, that "although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation." And the scriptures adduced to prove this, are—1 Cor. i. 21. "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe:" 1 Cor. ii. 13. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual:" Ver. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

9. Hence see the nature of faith,—it is a firm persuasion, founded upon a divine testimony, that the Angel of the Lord hath done all in the great work of redemption; that he hath "finished the work which his Father gave him to

do;" and that he is "of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and therefore that it must be a receiving, and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is thus offered unto us in the gospel.

10. Hence see the true spring of gospel holiness,—it flows from a "looking on" and "beholding" the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously. Faith's discovery of him, as doing and suffering all, cannot but beget in us self-loathing and abhorrence on account of sin as laid on him, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him:" and likewise a desire of conformity to the law, as a rule, because he hath fulfilled it as a covenant; for "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." Thus it is by faith our hearts are purified, Acts xv. 9; and this is so necessary, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

11. Is Christ the wonderful and only doer in the great work of redemption? and is it the privilege and duty of mankind-sinners to "look on?" then this doctrine may afford matter for several questions, which may be proposed by way of trial, whereby we may form some judgment of our spiritual state and condition; and it is as necessary to inquire into the circumstances of our souls after, as before, a communion.

(1.) Are you convinced that you have violated the law of God in the first Adam, and that you have justly incurred the wrath of God, which is denounced upon the breach of the first covenant? Do you believe that you were represented in Adam when God made the covenant with him, and in consequence of this federal representation, that his first sin is justly imputed unto you for your condemnation, and therefore that you not only want original righteousness, but that your natures are wholly corrupted? Without some uptaking of this deplorable state wherein you are by nature, it is impossible you can see the least need of the Angel's doing wondrously, in condescending to be the Head of the new covenant, to fulfil the condition there-

of in point of doing and suffering, that this his perfect righteousness might be imputed to you for your justification and title to eternal life. No sooner are you made to see the wonders of redeeming love, in the substitution of Christ in your room, as the Head of the new creation, than presently you are convinced of your miserable condition, in standing related to the first Adam,—and that God is righteous in imputing Adam's first sin unto you,—and that he would also be righteous, though the threatening of the law were put in execution against you, saying, as it is Dan. ix. 7. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces."

(2.) Have you got a discovery of the nature of sin, what it really is? If you are "looking on," and beholding the Angel doing wondrously, you have certainly got some discovery of the evil nature or malignity of sin—"For you know that he was manifested to take away our sins," 1 John iii. 5; and ver. 8. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Therefore, if you are looking upon the Angel doing wondrously, you see that sin is that abominable thing which God hates, because it is the very opposite of his holy nature, and a transgression of his holy law. You see that it is so exceeding sinful that the whole flood of infinite wrath must be poured in upon the Son of God, as bearing it for us, before a free pardon and indemnity can be issued forth, in a consistency with the honour of justice; for "the Lord God merciful and gracious," in "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," will do it in such a way as "by no means to clear the guilty," without a full satisfaction to offended justice, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Again, in looking upon the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously in being a propitiation for sin, you have got a discovery of the evil of it, as it is a practical blaspheming of all the divine attributes and excellencies;—that it is a calling in question the truth and veracity of God, who "cannot lie,"—an undervaluing his manifold wisdom,—a slighting of his unspeakable goodness and infinite love,—a contempt of his impartial justice,

—and a despising of his just authority and almighty power. You have seen that sin is "wholly evil,"—that there is not the least good in it,—and therefore that any outward trouble ought to be the object of our choice rather than the least sin.

(3.) Have you been brought to see your own vileness and deformity by reason of sin? If you are looking on the Angel doing wondrously in taking away your sins, this will be the effect of it, that you will loathe and abhor yourselves in dust and ashes on account thereof, Job xlii. 5, 6. "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Have you seen yourselves to be wholly an unclean thing?—that from the head to the foot there is no soundness in you?—that there is nothing but darkness in your understanding, enmity and rebellion in your wills, disorder and carnality in your affections? And did you ever know what it is to get a discovery of this your vileness and deformity, not only in the glass of the law, but in the glass of the glory of Christ, manifesting himself to you in the word of the gospel?

(4.) Are you looking upon the Angel of the Lord doing wondrously? then you are persuaded that you can do nothing for your own recovery out of that deplorable state wherein you are plunged by your sin and apostasy from God,—that you cannot answer the least demand of the law with respect to that obedience which it requires,—and though you could, yet that you cannot make atonement for what is past, nor give unto God a sufficient ransom. In looking on the Angel of the Lord "travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save," you see your own utter weakness and inability to attempt any reparation to God's law which you have violated, or to stand before his offended justice; and therefore will be well pleased that the Lord hath laid your help "upon one that is mighty,"—that his hand hath been on the "man of his right hand," whom he hath made strong for himself.

(5.) What is your exercise about the legal bias of your hearts? If you are looking upon the Angel of the Lord

doing wondrously, then this legal bias will be matter of your deepest concern. You that are believers cannot but be sensible of a strong inclination in your treacherous and legal hearts to rest upon your duties, your graces, your frames, or attainments, as some ground of your acceptance before God; but it will be matter of mourning unto you that you should seek to rob him of any part of the whole glory, or that anything in you should claim the least share of it,—and therefore the language of your souls will be, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." —"Let him that builds the temple of the Lord bear all the glory."

(6.) What estimate do you put upon your own doings? If you are looking upon the Angel doing wondrously, you will think nothing of all that ever you did or can do,—though you have perhaps got some enlargement, at a time, in praying, praising, hearing, or communicating, yet you have sometimes found it to be as the "morning cloud, and the early dew," which soon goeth away. You have found such a deal of unbelief, formality, and hypocrisy cleaving to your best duties, that you have been made to conclude you have nothing of your own whereof you can boast,—that you have no good but what you have received, —and therefore that, at best, you are but "unprofitable servants."

(7.) What discoveries have been made to you by your looking upon the Angel doing wondrously? Have you seen the infinite moral distance betwixt God and you removed by his assuming your nature, and thereby a communication established betwixt heaven and earth, in that "new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh?" Have you seen your own sin and guilt in his meritorious oblation, that the "just suffered for the unjust?" Have you seen an "everlasting righteousness" wrought out for you in his obedience unto death? Have you got a view of the full and complete discharge of all your sins in his resurrection from the dead? Have you got a faith's sight of a place prepared

for you by his ascension, since he hath said, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also?" If you are looking upon the Angel doing wondrously, you are discerning a matchless glory in his person,—an unfathomable breadth, length, and depth in his love,—and an infinite worth in all that he hath done, as "Immanuel, God with us."

(8.) What is the principle and end of all that you do? If you are looking upon the Angel doing wondrously, the principle of all your actions will be faith in him and love to him. You will have faith in him, depending on his strength for assistance, and on his righteousness for acceptance in all that you do; and you will have love to him, which will make his service sweet and pleasant unto you, 1 John v. 3. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." His glory will be the great end you have in view:—you will be ready to say, Let him increase though I should decrease,—let him have in all things the pre-eminence,—let him be honoured, though I should be ever so much debased and despised. In a word, you will study to perform every duty, because he is thereby glorified; and to hate every sin, because he is thereby dishonoured.

(9.) How are you exercised when anything intervenes betwixt you and the Angel that has done wondrously? Surely, if you are "looking on," he will be so amiable and lovely in your eyes, that everything that keeps him out of your sight will be most troublesome unto you:—though you are sensible of being easily diverted to other objects, yet the desire of your souls will be, that you may be in case to say with the Psalmist, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise." And you will long for the time when the day will break and the shadows flee away.

12. Hath Christ, the Angel of the covenant, done wondrously? and is it your privilege to "look on?" then let us all be exhorted to turn aside and see this great sight.

As Moses said concerning the "bush burning and not consumed," Exod. iii. 3; so let every one of us say, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight," namely, the Angel doing wondrously. This is the greatest sight ever the world saw or heard of,—the wonder of angels and men,—the wonder of time and eternity,—that the eternal God, in our nature, should ascend in the flame of the sacrifice of *himself;* or that his death, in our room, should lay the foundation of his glorious and triumphant ascension as the Head of the whole mystical body. Well, then, what is here said of Manoah and his wife that they really did, we exhort you to do, and that is, to "look on" in a way of believing.

And to encourage you to fall in with the exhortation, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ calls you to look upon his only begotten Son, as the Angel that hath done wondrously in your behalf, Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."

Christ invites you to look on himself, in a way of believing, as the only doer in the great work of your redemption, Isa. lxv. 1. "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

He is lifted up on the pole of the everlasting gospel, for this very end, that you may look on him as the performer of all things for you; for, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," John iii. 14, 15. Although your right of access to salvation be founded allenarly in the free gift and grant thereof unto you in the word, yet your being actually interested therein, and possessed thereof, must be in a way of "looking on," or believing: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22.

Consider the present necessity of "looking on," or believing. It is *now,*—in a present life, or before death, that Christ is to be believed on,—or never: "For there is no

work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." At death the state is fixed irreversibly,—and none knows how soon God may send that inexorable messenger to sist them before his awful tribunal; therefore, "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The call to believe, or "look on," is to a present duty,—there is the utmost danger in delaying a matter of such importance, whereupon the happiness of your souls depends through eternity. O therefore, "Incline your ear; hear, and your soul shall live."

Christ, the Angel that did wondrously, is brought near to you in the word,—you are welcome to "look on," and appropriate all that you see to yourselves: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." It is unto you, as you are sinners, that "the word of this salvation is sent;" and "This is the command of God, that you believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And remember that there is no "escaping, if you neglect so great salvation."

Consider how earnest and importunate Christ is with you, that you "look on him," in a way of believing, to the saving of your souls. He sends forth his ambassadors to beseech you, in his stead, that you be reconciled to God. He complains of your aversion to him, John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." And he laments your refusal, Luke xix. 42. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Lastly, Consider that others have "looked on," and have found the benefit thereof to their comfortable experience, Psal. xxxiv. 5. "They looked to him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." And as we exhort you to the present exercise of "looking on," or believing, so likewise to the constant and habitual exercise thereof for the future, during your abode in the house of your pil-

grimage. Study to "live by faith of the Son of God;" for it is promised, "The just shall live by faith." This is one of the "good and perfect gifts which are from above, and come down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Faith is one of those gifts which are conferred without repentance; for he who is the author being also the finisher of faith, there can be no cause for his withdrawing of it which would not as well have hindered him from bestowing it at first; nor can there happen any after-unworthiness, in those whom he hath once privileged with this grace, which he did not foresee when he first wrought it in their souls.

In order to your living by faith on the Son of God, consider that all the offices he executes, as Mediator, are purely relative, bearing a relation to us,—he had never been clothed with any of them had it not been on our account. The offices of Christ are not like the attributes of God,—the attributes of God are absolutely essential to the divine nature,—God would have been infinite, eternal, unchangeable, &c., although no creature had ever existed; but Christ could not have been Prophet, Priest, and King, if there had not been sinners of mankind with relation to whom these offices were to be executed; so that they all bear a relation to us, in the miserable circumstances wherein sin hath plunged us,—and if you get a well-grounded persuasion that Christ your "passover is sacrificed" for you as a Priest, it will be the more easy to believe that he will enlighten you as a Prophet, and sanctify you as a King.

To conclude,—we would exhort you to evidence that it is your habitual exercise to be "looking on" the Angel doing wondrously, by your looking down with contempt on time-things, when laid in the balance with those that are eternal,—by being diligent in the practice of commanded duty,—by aspiring after nearer conformity to God in holiness,—and longing for the full enjoyment of him in heaven. And thus you will imitate the practice of Manoah and his wife, of whom it is said in our text, that when "the angel did wondrously, Manoah and his wife looked on."

SERMON IV.*

THE DOORS OF THE HEART SUMMONED TO OPEN TO THE KING OF GLORY.

PSAL. xxiv. 7.—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

IT is evident, from the title, that David was the penman of the Spirit of God in this psalm;—and it is generally thought that it was composed upon the occasion of his bringing up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom unto the tabernacle which he had pitched for it in mount Zion, 2 Sam. vi. 17; which, by the prophet Nathan, he understood would be the place where Solomon's temple should afterwards be built. Therefore, not doubting but that this glorious work would be finished in due time, and that the ark of God would be brought to its place therein, he, beforehand, poetically addresses the gates and doors of the temple, and gives them a solemn charge to give patent access to this glorious symbol of the divine presence, and eminent type of Christ, the Saviour and Surety of lost sinners of mankind: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," &c. In these words you may notice,

1. The object addressed,—it is literally the "gates" and "doors" of the temple, which David, by faith and the spirit of prophecy, beheld as already built; but typically and spiritually it is the gates and doors of the heart,—the temple typifying not only the human nature of Christ, but likewise his church. Hence the members of the church visible are called "the temple of God," 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know

* An Action Sermon, preached at Glasgow, August 31, 1755.

ye not that ye are the temple of God?" And the doors of this temple are fitly called "everlasting,"—because the soul of man, being of an immortal nature, the faculties thereof, which are its doors, cannot but be everlasting.

2. You have the address itself, or the solemn charge he gives to these gates and doors,—and that is, "to be lifted up:" "Lift up your heads, O ye gates:"—let your tops or lintels be raised up on high, that the entrance may be the more spacious and magnificent. Or, perhaps the lifting up of the heads or tops of the gates may be spoken in allusion to the iron-grates that are hung over the entry of fortified places, and let down for debarring all access; and so may denote the strong bars wherewith the heart of man is naturally fortified against Christ, and the way of salvation through him:—let all these be knocked off and give way. And whereas the summons is doubled,—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;" and "be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,"—it signifies both the importance of the duty and the peremptoriness of the charge. So that the amount of the solemn call seems to be this: 'Let the doors of every sinner's heart, to whom these presents shall come, be wide opened by believing; and every bar and obstacle be thereby presently made to give place, that so there may be a patent entrance for all the good that is wrapped up in the promise.'

3. You have the ground and reason of this repeated charge, or the motive enforcing such a solemn call,—it is the promise that "the King of glory shall come in." This King of glory is no other than Christ, who is called the "Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8; where it is said, that "if the princes of this world had known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Upon the words thus opened, I found the following doctrine, namely,—

Doctrine,—'That as there is a solemn charge given to sinners of mankind, in the dispensation of the gospel, to open or lift up the doors of their hearts to Christ, the King

of glory, in a way of believing; so it is secured, by promise, that he shall come in.'

The Method I propose to follow, through divine assistance, shall be, to speak—

I. Of the solemn charge here given to sinners of mankind, to "lift up" or "open" the everlasting doors of their hearts.

II. Of the "King of glory," in whose favours access to the heart is demanded.

III. Of the promise of his in-coming to the hearts of sinners. And,

IV. To apply the subject.

I. I return to the first of these,—namely, to speak of the *solemn charge* here given unto sinners of mankind to "lift up" or "open" the "everlasting doors" of their hearts. Upon this head I shall essay,

First, To show that the heart of man is by nature strongly fortified against Christ's entry into it.

Secondly, Inquire what are these "doors" of the heart, which are summoned to open unto him.

Thirdly, What is meant by the "lifting up" or "opening" of these doors; and *how* they open.

First, We are to show, that the heart of man is by nature strongly *fortified* against Christ's entry into it. This is implied in the solemn charge here given, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:"—which plainly says that they are naturally shut, and strongly bolted against the entry of the Son of God into them. I shall name a few of these bolts or bars wherewith the heart is naturally fortified against Christ.

1. There is the bar of *ignorance;* for, till "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus, shine in our hearts," they will remain shut upon him,—it being "the entrance only of his word that giveth light." But so soon as he is taken up in the light of his own word, presently the heart will open unto him in a way of believing; Psal. ix. 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

2. The heart of the sinner is fortified against Christ by *unbelief;* which is a rejecting the record and testimony of God concerning his eternal Son,—a treading him under foot, and reckoning the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing. Therefore, since there is salvation in no other, nor any "other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," it is impossible he can have any entrance, till we account it "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," of whom each of us have reason to reckon ourselves the "chief."

3. *Legality* is another strong bar upon the heart; for, while we go about to establish our own righteousness, we will never submit ourselves unto the righteousness of God; while we remain wedded to the law, as a covenant, we will never consent to be married to another, even to him who is raised again from the dead.

4. The heart of the sinner is naturally bolted against Christ with *self-sufficiency;* saying, with Laodicea, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And, indeed, while this is the case, we will never go a-begging at Wisdom's door, or open to him whom the Father hath loved, and "given all things into his hand," that out of his fulness we might receive, "and grace for grace."

5. Spiritual *lethargy*, or *security*, is another bar upon the heart; for, while the sinner is fast asleep, under all the alarms of word and providence, he cannot arise and open to Christ,—neither will he be awakened till the Spirit of God set home the law, in its spirituality and extent, upon the conscience; for, "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

6. *Hopeless despair* shuts the heart effectually against Christ; for, when once a person apprehends that his sins are so many, and so heinously aggravated, that there is no mercy or forgiveness for him, he is ready to give loose reins to corruption, and to say upon the matter, "There is no hope; I have loved strangers, and after them I will go." In which case, the longer the person lives, his heart

will still be the more hardened, unless a day of power brings about a saving change.

7. *Presumptuous confidence* bolts the heart against Christ; for, while a person mistakes his convictions, the qualms of his conscience, or the transient motions that may be, at a time, upon his affections, for real grace, he will certainly take ease and shelter to himself under these lying refuges till the hail sweep them away; and then he will see that a "deceived heart hath turned them aside." Thus you see that the heart of man is by nature strongly fortified against Christ's entry into it. I go on to

The *second* particular upon this general Head, which was to inquire, What are those "doors" which are summoned to open to Christ Jesus the Lord. For understanding this, you would know that there is here an allusion to the entry of great houses; as access to a great house is by outer and inner gates, so there are outer and inner doors of the heart by which it is accessible. The outer doors of the heart, while the soul is united to the body, are the ear and the eye.

1. There is the outer door of the *bodily ear;* which is an organ framed for hearing the words of Christ, and the summons given, in his name, by his sent servants, to open the everlasting doors of the heart unto him, Isa. lv. 3. "Incline your *ear*, come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live." The ear is such an useful door to the heart that faith is said to come by hearing, Rom. x. 17. "Faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the word of God."

2. The other outer door of the heart is the *eye* of the body; which is calculated for reading the Scriptures, which testify so amply of Christ. Hence are they pronounced blessed who read the word so as to feed on it by faith, Rev. i. 3 "Blessed is he that *readeth*, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the sayings which are written therein." So that the outer doors of the heart are the ear and the eye,—the one is summoned to listen, and the other to read and search the record of God concerning Christ.

But, then, as the heart hath those outer doors which we have mentioned, it has inner ones also which are summoned to "lift up" or "open" to the Son of God. These inner doors are the faculties of the soul, which are principally two, the understanding and the will. When these are lifted up, all the other powers of the soul fly open at once.

1. There is the inner door of the *understanding*, which is the leading faculty of the soul. This is naturally such a dungeon of darkness, that it cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God till the vail and covering that is upon it be rent by the power of efficacious grace; for, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." But so soon as the "day-spring" from on high visits the sinner, or the "Sun of righteousness" arises upon him, then the "shadows fly away," and "an understanding is given to know him who is the true God and eternal life," 1 John v. 20.

2. There is the inner door of the *will*,—which, ever since the fall, is bolted with opposition unto, and enmity against, the will of God; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Hence we find God's main complaint against sinners lodged at the door of their will, Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not!*" John v. 40. "Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye might have life." Howbeit, in a day of divine power, this iron-gate is made to give way, Psalm cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And thus, when these two inner doors of the heart, the understanding and the will, are opened and lifted up, the one by enlightening, the other by renewing grace, all the other powers of the soul open of course. The affections, following the enlightened mind and renewed will, centre on him who is "altogether lovely." The con-

science finds fault with and challenges every thing that is offensive in his sight. And the memory loves to retain him and his truths as the subject-matter of habitual meditation. Thus you see what are the "doors" of the heart which are summoned to open to Christ.

The *third* particular, on this Head, was to inquire what is meant by the "lifting up" or "opening" of these doors, and *how* they open. To the

1*st*. What is meant by the "lifting up" or "opening" these doors?—I answer, that the charge here given unto the gates to "lift up" their heads, and to the everlasting doors to "be lifted up," is just the very same with the command to "believe." It is a solemn charge laid upon sinners of mankind to believe on the Son of God, as the only way to the Father. As there can be no patent entry to a house but by open doors, so there can be no other way of giving reception to Christ but by believing on him;—hence "receiving" and "believing" are all one in Scripture, John i. 12. "As many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name." Christ comes to every man and woman's door only in the word of divine revelation, and consequently there can be no other way of receiving him but by believing that word as the record of God; for, as unbelief is a shutting him out of the heart, so faith is an opening thereof to take him in. And as nothing glorifies God so much as believing, therefore God claims it as his own peculiar work, John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." On the same account is faith called "precious," 2 Pet. i. 1; because it unites with precious Christ, and ties the marriage-knot which shall never be loosed. So it is the peculiar excellency of the grace of faith, to open the doors of the heart to receive in Christ Jesus the Lord. But then,

2*dly*. How do these doors open in believing?

1. In believing, a beam of divine, supernatural light, from the word, shines in upon the understanding, and thereby this door presently opens to take in the knowledge

of Christ, and of God in him, and of the whole of divine revelation. For, it is when the "eyes of the understanding are enlightened" that we "know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe," Eph. i. 18, 19. This saving illumination of the mind is the first work in the new creation, even as the making of light was the first particular work in the old:—hence the "new man" is said to be "renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 10.

2. In believing, the Spirit having moulded the will, in conformity to the will of God, it hereby opens to give a cordial reception to Christ, as presented to the understanding in the light of the word. The same Spirit, who powerfully sways the understanding to assent to the record of God as true, as powerfully inclines the will, at the same time, to embrace it as good. The light of the gospel, discovering Christ in the glory of his person, offices, and mediation, is darted in upon the understanding; and the same light is, by a secret working of the Spirit, reflected upon the will, whereby it is sweetly influenced to open to him as altogether lovely.

3. In believing, the affections get such a spiritual set, that they may be justly said to open to Christ when they can terminate nowhere solidly and permanently but on himself, and God in him, as the object of our highest love, desire, and esteem; so as to be in case to say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Or with the church, Isa. xxvi. 8. "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." Sirs, if the door of your understanding hath been opened to know Christ, and the door of your will to embrace him, your affections cannot miss to be enamoured and captivated with him; for spiritual light in the understanding will be always accompanied with some spiritual warmth upon the affections, Luke xxiv. 32. "Did not our hearts burn within us, while

he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

4. In believing, the conscience being purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, may be said to open to him when it can have no quiet or peace without some knowledge of a present interest in his love, as it was with the Spouse; she was restless till he returned with the wonted evidences of his kindness, Song iii. at the beginning.

5. In believing, the memory being made a receptacle of gospel truth, 1 Cor. xv. 2. may be said to open to Christ, when it is ready, not only to take in and lay up fresh store from the word, but likewise to bring forth and utter abundantly what it remembers of his great goodness, according to the promise, Psal. cxlv. 7. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness."—Thus you see what is meant by "lifting up" the doors of the heart, and *how* they open to Christ in believing. And so much for the first thing, namely, the solemn charge here given to "open" or "lift up" the everlasting doors of the heart. I now proceed to the

II. General Head of the Method, which was to speak of the "King of glory," in whose favour access to the heart is demanded. Upon this head, I shall,

First, Offer a few meditations concerning this glorious King.

Secondly, Inquire why called the King of glory.

First, A few propositions concerning this glorious King.

1. Our Lord Jesus is the *alone* King and Head of his church, by his Father's ordination and appointment, from eternity. The supreme rule which he exerciseth over all the creatures as God, is natural and essential to him, as being one in essence with the Father and Holy Ghost; but the sovereign power and authority, which he exerciseth in and over his church as Mediator, is "given" unto him as a reward of his purchase, Matt. xxviii. 18. "All power is *given* unto me," says he, "in heaven and in earth." Hence are so many royal titles assigned unto him; such as "Prince

of peace," "Captain of salvation," "Lord of glory," and "King of kings."

2. The assumption of the human nature was necessary to the execution of his office as a King; for he could not have mounted the throne as a King, if he had not first offered up himself, in the human nature, as a Priest, Luke xxiv. 26. "Ought not Christ to *suffer* these things, and to enter into his glory?"—hence called "a Priest upon his throne," Zech. vi. 13;—intimating that the cross was the way to the crown.

3. Although he exercised his kingly power, as Mediator, ever after the first promise, yet the solemnity of his instalment and investiture in the kingdom was not till his ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high, whereby he was made both Lord and Christ; "for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9.

4. His kingdom is quite of another nature, and altogether distinct, from the kingdoms of this world,—for it is a spiritual kingdom:—"My kingdom," says he to Pilate, "is not of this world." Everything in his kingdom is spiritual and heavenly,—the manner of the administration thereof, is not by secular arms and outward force, but by spiritual weapons only: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." His laws are spiritual, reaching the inward as well as the outward man. And the blessings which he distributes are chiefly of a spiritual nature,—such as, the pardon of sin, fellowship and communion with God, grace here, and glory hereafter.

5. He is a King of most singular and unparalleled qualifications:—for, (1.) He is a King of immeasurable wisdom and knowledge, the treasures of both being hid in him, Col. ii. 3. (2.) He is a King of irresistible power; for, as "all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth," so the armies of both are at his command. (3.) He is a King of unspotted holiness, being "the Holy One of Israel in the midst of us." (4.) He is a King of unsearchable riches and unbounded liberality; for, as "riches and honour are

with him," so he invites every one to whom he sends gospel-light to come and share of his fulness: Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." (5.) He is a King of untainted veracity,—for he is truth itself,—and all "the promises are in him Yea and Amen." (6.) He is an eternal and immortal King. He was dead, indeed; but because by his death he finished the purchase of our salvation, therefore "Behold he is alive for evermore," to see to the begun possession of it here, and the full fruition of it hereafter.

The *second* branch of this general Head was to inquire, Why he is called the "King of glory?" The expression hath a peculiar singularity in it; for, though kings, in some sense, may be said to be glorious, yet no other but Christ himself was ever styled "the King of glory." He is so called,

1. Because there is in the human nature, now exalted, a bright manifestation of the glory of his divine person. The union between the two natures was the same, in a state of humiliation, that it is now in a state of exaltation; but the glory of the divine nature, which was veiled for a while by the sinless infirmities and voluntary abasement to which he submitted before his resurrection, did appear again in all its former splendour, by the glorification of the human nature, in its ascension to the right hand of the throne of God,—which is the meaning of Christ's words to his Father, John xvii. 5. "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

2. He is called "the King of glory," because the glory, in which he was installed at his ascension, is unspeakably great. For, as the human nature, in virtue of its union with the Son of God, was capable of being filled with the Spirit above all measure; so, for the same reason, it is capable of a glory inconceivably great,—as seems plainly to be imported in the expression, Phil. ii. 9. "God also

hath highly exalted him." The original word is, "super-exalted" him; that is, exalted him above all the conception of angels or men.

3. He is called "the King of glory," because he is the receptacle and storehouse of all glory; "For the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." This will be acknowledged by all the inhabitants of the upper sanctuary for ever and ever: Rev. v. 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

4. He is called "the King of glory," because he is the dispenser of all that glory which shall ever be let out among the saints through eternity; for he received gifts, not for himself, but "for men," that he might bestow them variously at his pleasure among sinners of mankind. Accordingly, as he will give grace here, so he will give glory hereafter, that on him may "hang all the glory of his Father's house, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons."

5. "He is called "the King of glory," because there is a refulgency or brightness of glory always shining out from him. As the sun in the firmament diffuses and spreads abroad its light freely, liberally, and continually; so there is a bountiful and perpetual emanation of glory from the Sun of righteousness, and that both in this life and in that which is to come. In this life, his glory shines mediately, through the glass of the word, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." And in the life to come, his glory shines immediately on all the ransomed company, which is the very soul of their glory for ever:—hence says he, John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

6. He is called "the King of glory," because of the badges of glory and sovereignty that are ascribed unto him. He hath a throne of glory on which he sits, Matt. xxv. 31. "When the Son of man shall come, and all his

holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the *throne* of his glory." He has a sceptre of glory which he sways, and this is no other than the glorious gospel, called the "rod of his strength," Psal. cx. 2. He has a glorious retinue; for "thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him." He has a glorious robe, hence said to be "glorious in his apparel," Isa. lxiii. 1. And he has a glorious tribute and revenue paid in to him; for in him "shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."—Thus I have hinted, very imperfectly, at a few things only on this inexhaustible subject, concerning "the King of glory," in whose favours access to the heart is demanded. I now proceed to the

III. Thing in the Method,—namely, The *promise* of his in-coming to the hearts of sinners—"The King of glory *shall come in.*" Upon this Head I shall briefly essay these two things:—

First, Inquire into the *import* of the promise, "The King of glory shall come in."

Secondly, Mention a few of the *great things* he brings alongst with him when he comes.

First, What is *imported* in this promise, "The King of glory *shall come in?*"

1. It imports, that this glorious person has himself removed all legal bars and impediments that were in the way of his access unto the soul. Sin made an infinite moral distance betwixt God and us, and blocked up all communication with heaven; but this he removed by his obedience unto the death in our room,—whereby all the demands that law and justice had against us were fully answered, and nothing could any more be laid "to the charge of God's elect."

2. "The King of glory shall come in,"—it imports, that, next to the union of the two natures in the person of the Son, there cannot be a greater wonder than that God in our nature should take up his lodging in such hearts as ours,—considering that he is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords," and we

"wretched, miserable, blind, and naked" sinners. To see an earthly prince come and dwell with a beggar, would be nothing at all in comparison of a God of unspotted holiness dwelling with guilty and polluted souls. Surely we may wonder that such a glorious person should ever condescend to come under such pitiful and contemptible roofs as ours are: each of us may well say with the centurion, Matt. viii. 8. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof."

3. It imports, that he is waiting and knocking at every man and woman's door, just ready to enter upon the opening; Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I *stand* at the door and *knock:* if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." O! how near is he to us, when he is in the word of faith which we preach, and which you are just now hearing!

4. It imports the certainty of the thing—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of glory *shall* come in:"—there is no peradventure about it, he will surely "come in" to the soul that opens to him in a way of believing; John xi. 40. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" For, though there be no necessary connexion betwixt duties as performed by us, and any saving benefit or blessing whatsoever; yet, in the order of the covenant, there is such a connexion among the blessings themselves that one comes along with another; as here, Christ's in-coming to the soul is secured, by promise, to accompany believing: "Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

5. It imports, that in opening the heart to Christ by believing, there commences the closest union between him and the soul, so as that they presently coalesce into one body, whereof he is the Head, and they the members that are nourished by it. And as they coalesce in one body, so likewise into one spirit; for the same spirit that rests on the Head animates every one of the members: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

6. It imports, that, as a fruit of this union, there is an

interest and propriety in his person, and all that he hath. An interest in his person, so as to have ground to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" and an interest in all that he hath,—an interest in his righteousness, his fulness, and the whole of his salvation.

7. It implies the delight and satisfaction that Christ will have in the soul that opens unto him. As his delights were, from eternity, with the sons of men, so when he comes into any of their souls in time, he says to them, as it is Song vii. 6. "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" For we read, that "the Lord taketh pleasure in his people," Psal. cxlix. 4.

8. "The King of glory shall come in,"—it implies that his abode shall be continual. He will not come in as a "stranger or way-faring man to tarry only for a night;" but he will come in as a constant residenter, saying of the soul as he does of Zion, Psal. cxxxii. 14. "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

The *second* particular, upon this general Head, was to mention a few of the *great things* he brings along with him when he comes. And indeed they are so great that their greatness is unutterable. For,

1. He brings God along with him; and it cannot be otherwise, seeing "God is in Christ." "He that hath seen me," says Christ, "hath seen my Father also." This mutual in-being of the Father, and the Son, and the believer in each other, will remain an impenetrable mystery till the last day declare it; John xiv. 20. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

2. He brings the Spirit along with him, to receive of his and "show it unto you." He brings the Spirit to "abide with you for ever;" to "bring all things to your remembrance," and to "guide you into all truth."

3. He brings all the glorious perfections of God along with him, to be employed in and about the soul that opens to him in a way of believing. The infinity of God, to be the inexhaustible fund of our supply,—his eternity, to se-

cure the perpetuity of our inheritance,—his unchangeableness, to ascertain our perseverance notwithstanding of our daily failings and infirmities,—his wisdom, to give us counsel,—his power, to defend us,—his holiness, to conform us to himself,—his justice, to acquit us,—his goodness, to withhold nothing that is for our profit,—and his truth, to "do as he hath said."

4. He brings all the promises of the covenant along with him, and all the blessings that are contained in them. He brings "gold tried in the fire," to enrich the poor,—"white raiment," for clothing the naked,—and "eye-salve," for enlightening the eyes of the blind. He brings life to quicken the dead, liberty to the captive, and an ample indemnity to the guilty sinner of all his transgressions, be what they will. He brings strength to the weak, healing to the diseased, and comfort to the mourner in Zion. In a word, he brings "all things" along with him; hence says the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 22. "*All things* are yours, and ye are Christ's."—So much for the doctrinal part. I now proceed to make some

Application of what hath been said. And the First Use shall be of Information, in two Inferences.

1. Hence see the excellency of the grace of *faith*. Other graces do virtuously, but faith excels them all; for it lifts up and throws open the doors of the heart to Christ,—it unites with him, takes hold of his righteousness for pardon and acceptance, and continually brings an empty hand to receive out of his fulness. It is by faith we have peace with God,—it purifies the heart, and sometimes "joy unspeakable" is the fruit of it; hence says the Apostle Peter, "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." Faith glories and triumphs only in Christ,—it sucks honey out of every flower of the promise, and ventures boldly through all dangers and difficulties in the strength that is in Christ Jesus. In a word, it is the very thing that most glorifies God, and is most pleasing unto him; for, "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6.

2. Hence, on the other hand, see the malignant and soul-

ruining nature of *unbelief:* for, as faith opens the door of the heart unto Christ, unbelief shuts and keeps them fast against him. It is the great mean whereby Satan keeps possession of the soul; for, it puts no value on the precious promises, it despises the threatenings, and gives a flat refusal to the command of God to believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. O then, "take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,"—rejecting "the counsel of God against yourselves," "neglecting so great salvation," and consequently bringing upon yourselves "swift destruction."

The Second Use shall be of Examination. This is a Communion-Sabbath with us in this congregation; and the express command of God is, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup." And as it is the duty of communicants, so likewise of all others who hear the gospel, to "examine themselves whether they be in the faith." Well, then, try whether, in a way of believing, your hearts have ever been opened unto "the King of glory;" or, whether he hath actually come in to them.

1. If your hearts have been opened to him by believing, then, upon his very first entry, his rivals have been disbanded, and you have been made to say, with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" You desire henceforth to give no more peaceable possession to sin as formerly, but constantly endeavour to resist it, and to wage a perpetual war with it; and when you see you cannot get rid of it, you will groan under the remains thereof, saying, with Paul, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

2. If your hearts have been opened to Christ, you have been made to fall a-wondering at the matchless glory and excellency of his person,—that none less than the "great God is your Saviour,"—that He, who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God," should take upon him "the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," in your stead. When you see the two

natures of God and man met together in a personal union, you will be ready to say, with amazement, "What hath God wrought!" "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness."

3. If "the King of glory" hath come in to your hearts, the glory of his person has so darkened all created excellency, that you account it "less than nothing and vanity" when compared with him,—even as the stars quite disappear when the sun arises in the firmament. If he hath come in, he will be absolutely matchless and incomparable in your eye; so that you will be saying as it is Psal. lxxiv. 6. "Thou art more glorious and excellent than all the mountains of prey."

4. If "the King of glory" hath come in, you have experienced somewhat of heart-melting grief and sorrow, arising from a discovery of the evil of sin, in what he suffered on account of it in your room and stead; Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall *mourn* for him." When you get a view of God as pacified towards you, for all that you have done, you will be so "confounded as never to open your mouth any more, because of your shame," Ezek. xvi. 63.

5. If your hearts have been opened to "the King of glory," in a way of believing, your affections of love, desire, and esteem, will be strongly moving out towards him; or, at least, you will know sometimes what it is to be "sick of love;" that is, to have a soul-sickness, because you cannot get him loved according to his worth.

6. If the everlasting doors of your hearts have been opened to "the King of glory," then you will desire farther acquaintance and intimacy with him, nearer conformity and likeness unto him, and more and more liberal communications from him, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." It will be your desire to speak to his praise, to run his errands, and to "cause his name to be remembered in all generations."

The Third Use shall be of Exhortation. And our exhortation to all and every one of you, without exception, is, in

the words of our text, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:"—let the faculties of your souls, which are the doors of your hearts, fly presently open, in a way of believing, to receive in "the King of glory," who is just now ready, in the dispensation of the word, to come in to each of your hearts. O be persuaded to let him in to the innermost recesses or retirements of your souls! We call you in his name, and beseech you in his stead, that ye keep not shut doors upon him, on such a day as this, when he is come, both in the word and sacrament, demanding access in the most kindly manner, and by the most endearing compellations, saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night."

Now, because the Lord Jesus draws with the "cords of a man," or deals with men and women as rational agents, I shall present you with some Scripture arguments, or motives, to engage you to lift up the everlasting doors of your hearts unto "the King of glory," that he may come in. Only, while we are essaying to persuade you from the word, look up to himself, that he may "put in his hand by the hole of the door," and make your bowels move for him, —that he would make his own way,—and, by the display of his glory and majesty, in the word, ride in prosperously into your souls. Well, then,—

1. Consider what you and I are; and what sort of a habitation our hearts have been, into which "the King of glory" hath either come, or into which he is just now offering to enter. Why, we are naturally "a generation of vipers, rebellious children," loathsome creatures, separated from God by reason of the leprosy of sin;—we are under the curse, and "twice dead,"—dead in sin, and dead in law. As for our hearts, they have been an habitation of darkness, an habitation of lusts, and an "habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird,"—as it is said of spiritual Babylon, Rev. xviii. 2. O then, be filled with wonder and

amazement that ever such a glorious person should come, in the word of his grace, and say to such desperately wicked hearts as ours are—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors."

2. Consider what a wonderful revolution he will make when he comes in. He will pull down "strongholds; cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." He will bind "the strong man," and overcome him, and take from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divide his spoils. In a word, he will make "old things to pass away, and all things to become new."

3. To engage you to open your hearts to him, consider what he hath promised to be unto you when he comes in. He hath promised that he "will be a Father to you," and that "you shall be his sons and daughters," 2 Cor. iii. 18. He hath promised that he will be a "husband," who will betrothe you to himself for ever, Hos. ii. 19. He hath promised that, as a Prophet, he will make you know the "mysteries of the kingdom;" as a Priest, he will offer up your prayers and praises with acceptance, Isa. lvi. 7. "Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on mine altar;" and as a King, will protect you in all your liberties and privileges. He hath promised, that he will be a counsellor to advise you in all your straits, and a guide to lead you in the way you know not.

4. Consider how sib he is unto you who is bidding you lift up and open the everlasting doors of your hearts unto him. He is your near kinsman; "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh;" for, because "the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." And he hath acted a kinsman's part to the full,—he hath avenged your quarrel on Satan, who ruined you,—and hath redeemed the forfeited inheritance, and is now demanding you in marriage, saying, "Thy Maker is thy husband." Should not this engage you to open unto him?

5. Consider what an expensive journey he hath made, in order to win to the doors of your hearts to demand entrance into them. He hath travelled not only through poverty and reproach, but through unspeakable sorrows and griefs,—he hath travelled not only through the armies of hell, and the territories of death and the grave, but through desertion and tentation,—through the deep seas of soul-trouble and anguish, and through the impassable mountains of fiery avenging wrath,—yet, after all, to keep the door shut upon him, O how wicked and ungrateful is it! Could you find in your hearts to give the back of the door to any of your friends or acquaintances, who would come to visit you through much difficulty and danger? Yet, how infinitely worse is it to refuse access unto him, who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" and who "was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!"

6. O be persuaded to lift up the doors of your hearts, in a way of believing, for "the King of glory" is fond to come in; yea, he is so fond to come in to your hearts, ill as they are, that he stands, he knocks, he cries at your doors. He is grieved when your hearts are hardened against him, and most glad when they open unto him; for, the day of his entrance, being the "day of his espousals," is therefore "the day of the gladness of his heart," Song iii. 11.

7. Consider the dangerous consequences of keeping the doors of your hearts shut upon him by unbelief. He will be provoked to depart from you, and then woe will be unto you in that case; for all manner of spiritual plagues will waste and consume you,—a plague of blindness, that you shall not see what belongs to your peace,—a plague of hardness, whereby neither word nor rod shall have any good effect upon you,—a plague of barrenness, whereby no fruit will be found on you from henceforth,—and a plague of security, whereby you shall slumber and sleep on, till in hell you lift up your eyes.

8. Consider, that if you continue to keep the doors of your hearts shut upon the "the King of glory," by your unbelief, then Satan will continue to reign and rule over you as his slaves and vassals,—and sad will be the servitude and drudgery he will set you to: he will set you a-feeding of your own swinish lusts,—your drunkenness perhaps, or your uncleanness, your pride, your covetousness, and the like: he will set you in a fool's paradise, where he will make you dream that you are eating and drinking, and stand in need of nothing; but, behold! when you awaken, you will find, to your sad experience, when it is past remedy, that your soul is empty. Meanwhile, he will take care to make your bands strong; and, in these very bands, he will make you dance to his spring, till at length your mirth and jollity end in "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." O that you were wise, and considered these things in time!

9. Open the doors of your hearts by believing, and then the moment that your souls shall leave your bodies at death, they shall "immediately pass into the palace of the King of glory," where they shall abide in the greatest happiness and glory, till they be united to their respective glorified bodies at the last day; and then, soul and body, shall be for ever with the Lord, unweariedly employed in songs of everlasting joy, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away; for God himself "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

But, my dear friends, why need I insist on arguments with you, to persuade you to believe, or to open your hearts to Christ? The call and exhortation in our text bears its own motive and argument along with it: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." This is enough, "The King of glory shall come in." This, I say, ought to have influence with you all to open in a way of believing, that "the King of glory shall come in." He "shall come in" to beautify you with his salvation,—to justify you by his righteousness,—to sanctify you by the inhabitation of

his Spirit,—to be your God for ever and ever, and your "guide even unto death," when you shall be beyond all hazard and danger, the former things having then for ever passed away. O then, for the Lord's sake, and your own soul's sake, hearken to the call of God in the text,—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in:"—then you who are communicants shall have a comfortable communion, and you who are spectators shall have reason to say, with Jacob, "Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not."

DISCOURSE ON THE EVENING OF THE SAME DAY,

AFTER THE TABLES.

In prosecuting the Application of the subject I was upon in the morning a little further, I shall only, at this time, offer a few Observations on the Manner in which "the King of glory" demands access to the hearts of sinners of mankind; and then remove a few Objections against opening unto him in a way of believing. With reference to the Manner in which "the King of glory" demands access into the hearts of sinners, I may observe,

1. That when he comes to the door of any man or woman's heart in the word, it is "without observation" to any other than the particular person with whom he is dealing at the time. Every one here present, who is awake, and whose mind is not wandering upon other objects, has access to hear the external sound of the gospel equally; but none knows what the Spirit of God is doing with his word but the individual person with whom he is at work, either in a way of conviction, illumination, consolation, or the like special influence.

2. I may observe, as was formerly hinted, that the Lord Jesus doubles or repeats his demand for access into the hearts of poor sinners, as you see the words of the text expressly bear—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors." He stands at the door and knocks, as waiting to be gracious, and loath to take a denial;—and surely the oftener the call is repeated, the more inexcusable will we be if we refuse to hearken; for, it will be more tolerable for those who never heard the gospel, than for us who "neglect so great salvation."

3. Christ doth not demand access into the heart of every sinner after the same manner,—so that his way with one cannot be the measure of

his dealing with another. He makes his demand for entrance into the hearts of some in a milder, and into the hearts of others in a more awful and terrible manner; as you may see in his different way with the jailer and with Lydia. The "terrors of the Lord" were let loose upon the jailer, displaying the nature and desert of sin in such a clear and formidable light, that the poor man was presently brought to his wit's end, and knew not what to do: "He sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,—and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 29, 30. Whereas, upon the other hand, the heart of Lydia was opened in a much softer and milder way. It would seem she had not those previous legal convictions, at least in such a degree, as the jailer had; for it is said, ver. 14. of the same chapter, that, in hearing of the word, "the Lord opened her heart, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul."

4. It may be noticed on this head, that none can possibly be in a more desperate condition, in this life, that when the Son of God *ceases* to demand entrance into their hearts any more; for, in this case, their ruin is inevitable,—in regard they are judicially given up to their hearts' lusts, as Israel was, Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. "My people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would have none of me. So I gave them up to their hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." Or—which is the same thing—they are left entirely to themselves, which was the case with Ephraim, Hos. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." For, when he calls and we refuse, and when he stretches out his hands and no man regardeth, it is no wonder that he also "laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh."

But now, because it is our duty, who are ministers, to "prepare the way of the people, to cast up the highway, and gather out the stones," I shall therefore endeavour to remove some Objections, which unbelief may be ready to make against opening the door of the heart unto Christ, when he is demanding access, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors."

1. Then, some may be ready to say, 'My conscience testifies I am such a *guilty sinner*, and that my guilt hath such peculiar aggravations attending it, that I cannot think that ever the King of glory will look near the like of me.'

I *answer*,—Our Lord Jesus never yet refused to come in to a sinner, merely on account of the greatness of his sin; nay, on the contrary, he invites and calls the guiltiest and greatest of sinners to open unto him, saying, "Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." What were Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, Paul, and others, but the greatest of sinners? Yet they obtained mercy, that they might be a pattern to all after-sinners, not to despair of mercy on account of the greatness of their sin. Yea, you should be so far from this, that you should make the greatness of your sin an argument and motive for your opening to Christ, by whose righteousness only it can be taken away; saying, with David, Psal. xxv. 11. "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is *great*."

2. If another object, 'I am no way *prepared* for the reception of such a glorious person; I have no good quality in me fit for entertaining him, and therefore he cannot be calling such as I am, to open the door of my

heart to him, till I have other dispositions and qualifications than I have at present.'

Answer. This looks like the language of a proud legalist,—who imagines he can prepare himself for the reception of "the King of glory," as easily as he can prepare for the entertainment of a person of distinction among men. But, sirs, there is a vast odds. We may make some preparation for the entertainment of a fellow-creature,—we may cleanse our houses, and have things in tolerable order,—but we can make no preparation at all for the *first reception* of "the King of glory" into our hearts. The more we study to sweep ourselves clean before his first incoming, we will leave the more nastiness behind. The only way is, just to let him in to our hearts *as they are*, that he may fit them to be a habitation for himself; for it is he that must sanctify and cleanse us,—it is he that must give us repentance and remission of sins; and, in a word, it is he who must work all our works in us.

3. If any of you say, 'I have experienced nothing of a law-work, and therefore I cannot think he is calling me at present to open to him, till the law once become my schoolmaster to lead me to Christ.'

Answer. So soon as you open to Christ by believing, the law obtains its end,—the righteousness thereof is fulfilled in you,—and therefore do not make the want of a law-work a bar in the way of your opening unto him; but let the absolute need you stand in of him determine you to give him entrance. For, remember, while you keep shut doors upon "the King of glory," you are living in disobedience to the first and great commandment of the law, which is to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul;" and this you can never do without believing, which is the root and spring of true love.

4. Says another, 'I have refused access to Christ so often, that I am afraid he will never come in to me now.'

Answer. Though you have refused times without number, yet he still waits to be gracious; for says he, "I have spread out my hands all the day long to a rebellious people." He is as ready to come in now as ever; otherwise he would not make the call now sound in your ears, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," &c.; for, "though you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord."

5. Says another, 'I am quite *dead*, like the dry bones scattered about the grave's mouth, and therefore he cannot be calling on me to open to him.'

Answer. He commands us to *prophesy* unto the dry bones, and to tell them, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live;" "Therefore awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" "For the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

6. Some perhaps may be saying, 'I am harassed with such dreadful and uncommon temptations, that I fear "the King of glory" is so far from seeking access to my heart, that I am quite given up to the power of the enemy.'

Answer. It is not those, who are given up to the enemy's power, whom he most harasses with his temptations; for when "the strong man armed keeps the house, the goods are at peace." However, the only way to get rid of your temptations, how horrid soever they may be,

is to open to "the King of glory" by believing. It is he only who can "succour them that are tempted;" for, "having himself been tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin, he cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and therefore will either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted." Be not afraid, then, only believe, and "the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

O, sirs! whatever be your difficulties or objections against opening to Christ, in a way of believing, yet he is making none at all against his own incoming into your hearts. Though you be sinners, he declares he "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Though you be graceless, yet is he "full of grace and truth." Have you made him "serve with your sins, and wearied him with your iniquities?" yet even in that case, he says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember your sin." Have you gone on frowardly in the way of your own heart? yet he is saying of you, as he did of Israel in the like case, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." Have you been making lies your refuge, and under falsehood hiding yourselves? even in this case he declares, that he is the "foundation laid in Zion for you; and that the refuge of lies shall be swept away." Have you "gone after your lovers, and forgotten me, saith the Lord?" he answers himself, "Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."

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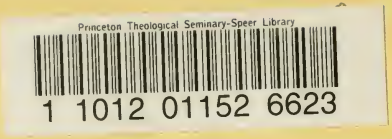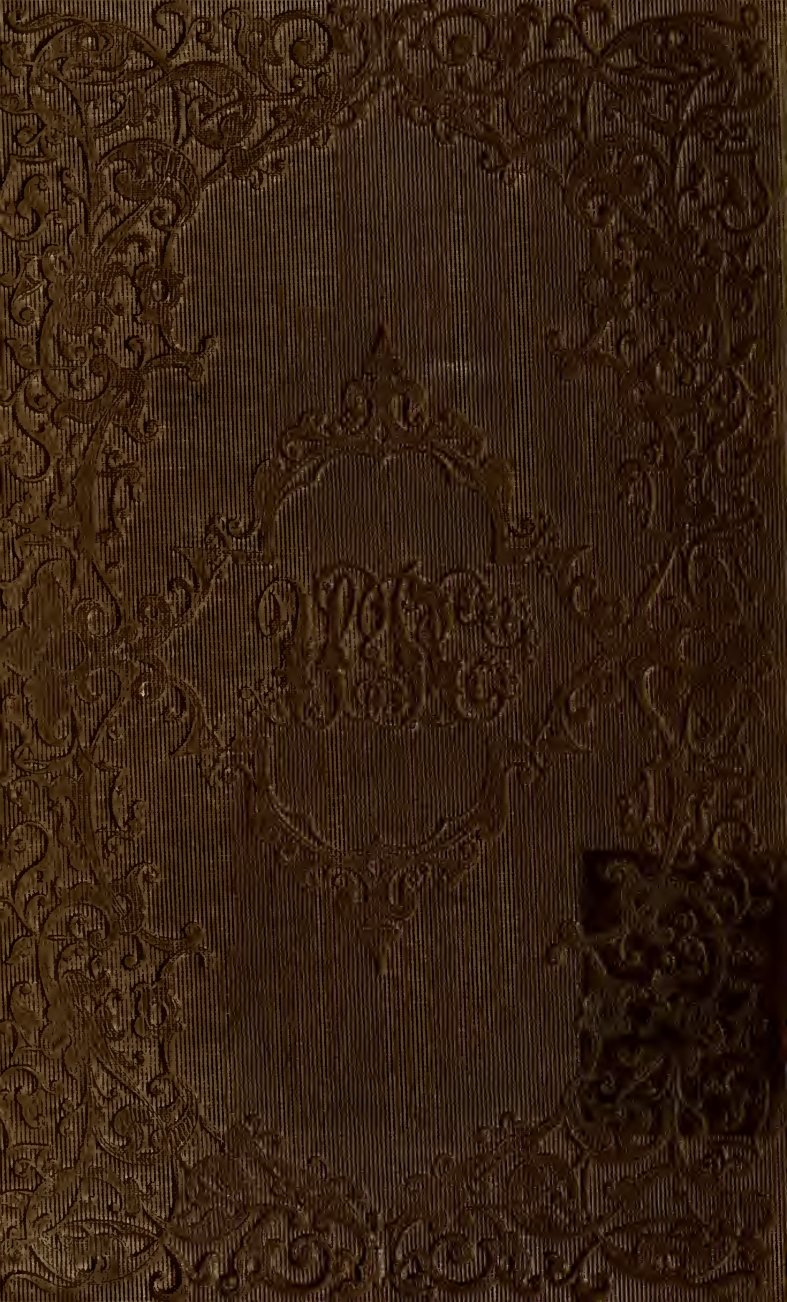
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